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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
G. K. CHESTERTON

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ESSAYS LITERARY & CRITICAL

by MATTHEW ARNOLD

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INTRODUCTION

OUR actual obligations to Matthew Arnold are almost beyond expression. His very faults reformed us. The chief of his services may perhaps be stated thus, that he discovered (for the modern English) the purely intellectual importance of humility. He had none of that hot humility which is the fascination of saints and good men. But he had a cold humility which he had discovered to be a mere essential of the intelligence. To see things clearly, he said, you must "get yourself out of the way." The weakness of pride lies after all in this; that oneself is a window. It can be a coloured window, if you will; but the more thickly you lay on the colours the less of a window it will be. The two things to be done with a window are to wash it and then forget it. So the truly pious have always said the two things to do personally are to cleanse and to forget oneself.

Matthew Arnold found the window of the English soul opaque with its own purple. The Englishman had painted his own image on the pane so gorgeously that it was practically a dead panel; it had no opening on the world without. He could not see the most obvious and enormous objects outside his own door. The Englishman could not see (for instance) that the French Revolution was a far-reaching, fundamental and most practical and successful change in the whole structure of Europe. He really thought that it was a bloody and futile episode, in weak imitation of an English General Election. The Englishman could not see that the Catholic Church was (at the very least) an immense and enduring Latin civilisation, linking us to the lost civilisations of the Mediterranean. He really thought it was a sort of sect. The Englishman could not see that the Franco-Prussian war was the entrance of a new and menacing military age, a terror to England and to all. He really thought it was a little lesson to Louis Napoleon for not reading the *Times*. The most enormous catastrophe was only some kind of symbolic compliment to England. If the sun fell from Heaven it only showed how wise England was in not having much sunshine. If the waters were turned to blood it was only an advertisement for Bass's Ale or Fry's Cocoa. Such was the weak pride of the English then. One cannot say that is wholly undiscoverable now.

But Arnold made war on it. One excellent point which he made in many places was to this effect; that those very foreign tributes to England which Englishmen quoted as showing their own merit were examples of the particular foreign merit which we did not share. Frenchmen bragged about France and Germans about Germany, doubtless; but they retained just enough of an impartial interest in the mere truth itself to remark upon the more outstanding and obvious of the superiorities of England. Arnold justly complained that when a Frenchman wrote about English political liberty we always thought it a tribute simply to English political liberty. We never thought of it as a tribute to French philosophical liberty. Examples of this are still relevant. A Frenchman wrote some time ago a book called *A quoi tient la supériorité des Anglo-Saxons?* What Englishman dare write a book called "What causes the Superiority of Frenchmen"? But this lucid abnegation is a power. When a Frenchman calls a book "What is the Superiority of Englishmen?" we ought to point to that book and say—"this is the superiority of Frenchmen."

This humility, as I say, was with Arnold a mental need. He was not naturally a humble man; he might even be called a supercilious one. But he was driven to preaching humility merely as a thing to clear the head. He found the virtue which was just then being flung in the mire as fit only for nuns and slaves: and he saw that it was essential to philosophers. The most unpractical merit of ancient piety became the most practical merit of modern investigation. I repeat, he did not understand that headlong and happy humility which belongs to the more beautiful souls of the simpler ages. He did not appreciate the force (nor perhaps the humour) of St. Francis of Assisi when he called his own body "my brother the donkey." That is to say, he did not realise a certain feeling deep in all mystics in the face of the dual destiny. He did not realise their feeling (full both of fear and laughter) that the body *is* an animal and a very comic animal. Matthew Arnold could never have felt any part of himself to be purely comic—not even his singular whiskers. He would never, like Father Juniper, have "played see-saw to abase himself." In a word, he had little sympathy with the old ecstasies of self-effacement. But for this very reason it is all the more important that his main work was an attempt to preach some kind of self-effacement even to his own self-assertive age. He realised that the saints had even understated the case for humility. They had always said that without humility we should never see the better world to come. He realised that without humility we could not even see this world.

Nevertheless, as I have said, a certain tincture of pride was natural to him and prevented him from appreciating some things of great human value. It prevented him for instance from having an adequate degree of popular sympathy. He had (what is so rare in England) the sense of the state as one thing, consisting of all its citizens, the Senatus Populusque Romanus. But he had not the feeling of familiarity with the loves and hungers of the common man, which is the essence of the egalitarian sentiment. He was a republican, but he was not a democrat. He contemptuously dismissed the wage-earning, beer-drinking, ordinary labourers of England as "merely populace." They are not populace; they are merely mankind. If you do not like them you do not like mankind. And when all the *rôle* of Arnold's real glories has been told, there always does remain a kind of hovering doubt as to whether he did like mankind.

But of course the key of Arnold in most matters is that he deliberately conceived himself to be a corrective. He prided himself not upon telling the truth but upon telling the unpopular half-truth. He blamed his contemporaries, Carlyle for instance, not for telling falsehoods but simply for telling popular truths. And certainly in the case of Carlyle and others he was more or less right. Carlyle professed to be a Jeremiah and even a misanthrope. But he was really a demagogue and, in one sense, even a flatterer. He was entirely sincere as all good demagogues are; he merely shared all the peculiar vanities and many of the peculiar illusions of the people to whom he spoke. He told Englishmen that they were Teutons, that they were Vikings, that they were practical politicians—all the things they like to be told they are, all the things that they are not. He told them, indeed, with a dark reproachfulness, that their strengths were lying neglected or inert. Still he reminded them of their strengths; and they liked him. But they did not like Arnold, who placidly reminded them of their weaknesses.

Arnold suffered, however, from thus consenting merely to correct; from thus consenting to tell the half-truth that was neglected. He reached at times a fanaticism that was all the more extraordinary because it was a fanaticism of moderation, an intemperance of temperance. This may be seen, I think, in the admirable argument for classical supremacy to which so much of this selection is devoted. He saw and very rightly asserted that the fault of the Mid-Victorian English was that they did not seem to have any sense of definite excellence. Nothing could be better than the way in which he points out in the very important essay on "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" that the French admit into intellectual problems the same principle of clearly stated and generally admitted dogmas which all of us in our daily lives admit into moral problems. The French, as he puts it in a good summarising phrase, have a conscience in literary matters. Upon the opposite English evil he poured perpetual satire. That any man who had money enough to start a paper could start a paper and say it was as good as the *Athenæum;* that anyone who had money enough to run a school could run a school and say it was as good as Winchester; these marks of the English anarchy he continually denounced. But he hardly sufficiently noticed that if this English extreme of a vulgar and indiscriminate acceptance be most certainly an extreme and something of a madness, it is equally true that his own celebration of excellence when carried past a certain point might become a very considerable madness also; indeed has become such a madness in some of the artistic epochs of the world. It is true that a man is in some danger of becoming a lunatic if he builds a stucco house and says it is as fine as the Parthenon. But surely a man is equally near to a lunatic if he refuses to live in any house except the Parthenon. A frantic hunger for all kinds of inappropriate food may be a mark of a lunatic; but it is also the mark of a lunatic to be fastidious about food.

One of the immense benefits conferred on us by Matthew Arnold lay in the fact that he recalled to us the vital fact that we are Europeans. He had a consciousness of Europe much fuller and firmer than that of any of the great men of his great epoch. For instance, he admired the Germans as Carlyle admired the Germans; perhaps he admired the Germans too much as Carlyle admired the Germans too much. But he was not deluded by any separatist follies about the superiority of a Teutonic race. If he admired the Germans it was for being European, signally and splendidly European. He did not, like Carlyle, admire the Germans for being German. Like Carlyle, he relied much on the sagacity of Goethe. But the sagacity of Goethe upon which he relied was not a rugged or cloudy sagacity, the German element in Goethe. It was the Greek element in Goethe: a lucid and equalised sagacity, a moderation and a calm such as Carlyle could not have admired, nay, could not even have imagined. Arnold did indeed wish, as every sane European wishes, that the nations that make up Europe should continue to be individual; that the contributions from the nations should be national. But he did wish that the contributions should be contributions, parts, that is, of a common cause and unity, the cause and unity of European civilisation. He desired that Germany should be great, so as to make Europe great. He would not have desired that Germany should grow great so as to make Europe small. Anything, however big and formidable, which tended to divide us from the common culture of our continent he would have regarded as a crotchet. Puritanism he regarded at bottom as only an enormous crotchet. The Anglo-Saxon race most certainly he would have regarded as an enormous crotchet.

In this respect it is curious to notice how English public opinion has within our own time contrived to swing from one position to the contrary position without her touching that central position which Arnold loved. He found the English people in a mood which seemed to him unreal and un-European, but this mood was one of smug Radical mediocrity, contemptuous of arts and aims of high policy and of national honour. Ten years after his death the English people were waving Union Jacks and shouting for "La Revanche." Yet though they had passed thus rapidly from extreme anti-militarism to extreme militarism they had never touched on the truth that Arnold had to tell. Whether as anti-militarists or as militarists, they were alike ignorant of the actualities of our

Aryan civilisation. They have passed from tameness to violence without touching strength. Whenever they really touch strength they will (with their wonderful English strength) do a number of things. One of the things may be to save the world. Another of the things will certainly be to thank Matthew Arnold.

G. K. CHESTERTON.

1906.

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888)

Alaric at Rome (Rugby Prize Poem), 1840; Cromwell (Newdigate Prize), 1843; The Strayed Reveller, and other Poems (Forsaken Merman, Mycerinus, etc.), 1849; Empedocles on Etna, and other Poems (Tristram and Iseult, etc.), 1852; Poems, with Prefatory Essay (Sohrab and Rustum, Scholar Gipsy, etc.), 1853, 1854, 1857; Poems: Second Series (Balder Dead, etc.), 1855; Merope: A Tragedy, 1858; England and the Italian Question, 1859; On Translating Homer (Three Lectures), 1861; Popular Education of France, 1861; On Translating Homer: Last Words, 1862; A French Eton, 1864; Essays in Criticism, 1865, 1869, 1889; New Poems (Thyrsis, A Southern Night, etc.), 1867; St Brandan (Poem), 1869; On the Study of Celtic Literature, 1867; Schools and Universities on the Continent, 1868; Culture and Anarchy (from *Cornhill*), 1869; St Paul and Protestantism (from *Cornhill*), 1870; Friendship's Garland, 1871; Literature and Dogma, 1873: God and the Bible, 1875; Last Essays on Church and Religion, 1877; Mixed Essays, 1879; Irish Essays, and Others, 1882; Discourses in America, 1885; Special Report on Elementary Education Abroad, 1886; Civilisation in the United States from *Nineteenth* and *Murray's Magazine*, 1888; Essays in Criticism: Second Series, 1888; Report on Elementary Schools (Ed. by Sir Francis Sandford, 1889), on Home Rule for Ireland (privately printed from two letters to the *Times*, 1891); Poems: Collected Ed., 1869, 1877, 1885, 1890; Works (with Bibliography), 15 vols., 1903; Letters: ed. G. W. E. Russell, 1895; Life: George Saintsbury (Modern English Writers); H. W. Paul (English Men of Letters); W. C. Brownell in Victorian Prose Masters; G. W. E. Russell (Literary Lives).

CRITICAL ESSAYS

I

THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM AT THE PRESENT TIME

MANY objections have been made to a proposition which, in some remarks of mine on translating Homer, I ventured to put forth; a proposition about criticism, and its importance at the present day. I said that "of the literature of France and Germany, as of the intellect of Europe in general, the main effort, for now many years, has been a critical effort; the endeavour, in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is." I added, that owing to the operation in English literature of certain causes, "almost the last thing for which one would come to English literature is just that very thing which now Europe most desires,—criticism;" and that the power and value of English literature was thereby impaired. More than one rejoinder declared that the importance I here assigned to criticism was excessive, and asserted the inherent superiority of the creative effort of the human spirit over its critical effort. And the other day, having been led by an excellent notice of Wordsworth, published in the *North British Review*, to turn again to his biography, I found, in the words of this great man, whom I, for one, must always listen to with the profoundest respect, a sentence passed on the critic's business, which seems to justify every possible disparagement of it. Wordsworth says in one of his letters:—

"The writers in these publications" (the Reviews), "while they prosecute their inglorious employment, cannot be supposed to be in a state of mind very favourable for being affected by the finer influences of a thing so pure as genuine poetry."

And a trustworthy reporter of his conversation quotes a more elaborate judgment to the same effect:—

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"Wordsworth holds the critical power very low, infinitely lower than the inventive; and he said to-day that if the quantity of time consumed in writing critiques on the works of others were given to original composition, of whatever kind it might be, it would be much better employed; it would make a man find out sooner his own level, and it would do infinitely less mischief. A false or malicious criticism may do much injury to the minds of others; a stupid invention, either in prose or verse, is quite harmless."

It is almost too much to expect of poor human nature, that a man capable of producing some effect in one line of literature, should, for the greater good of society, voluntarily doom himself to impotence and obscurity in another. Still less is this to be expected from men addicted to the composition of the "false or malicious criticism" of which Wordsworth speaks. However, everybody would admit that a false or malicious criticism had better never have been written. Everybody, too, would be willing to admit, as a general proposition, that the critical faculty is lower than the inventive. But is it true that criticism is really, in itself, a baneful and injurious employment? is it true that all time given to writing critiques on the works of others would be much better employed if it were given to original composition, of whatever kind this may be? Is it true that Johnson had better have gone on producing more *Irenes* instead of writing his *Lives of the Poets?* nay, is it certain that Wordsworth himself was better employed in making his Ecclesiastical Sonnets than when he made his celebrated Preface, so full of criticism, and criticism of the works of others? Wordsworth was himself a great critic, and it is to be sincerely regretted that he has not left us more criticism; Goethe was one of the greatest of critics, and we may sincerely congratulate ourselves that he has left us so much criticism. Without wasting time over the exaggeration which Wordsworth's judgment on criticism clearly contains, or over an attempt to trace the causes,—not difficult, I think, to be traced,—which may have led Wordsworth to this exaggeration, a critic may with advantage seize an occasion for trying his own conscience, and for asking himself of what real service, at any given moment, the practice of criticism either is, or may be made, to his own mind and spirit, and to the minds and spirits of others.

The critical power is of lower rank than the creative. True; but in assenting to this proposition, one or two things are to be kept in mind. It is undeniable that the exercise of a creative power, that a free creative activity, is the true function of man; it is proved to be so by man's finding in it his true happiness. But it is undeniable, also, that men may have the sense of exercising this free creative activity in other ways than in producing great works of literature or art; if it were not so, all but a very few men would be shut out from the true happiness of all men; they may have it in well-doing, they may have it in learning, they may have it even in criticising. This is one thing to be kept in mind. Another is, that the exercise of the creative power in the production of great works of literature or art, however high this exercise of it may rank, is not at all epochs and under all conditions possible; and that therefore labour may be vainly spent in attempting it, and may with more fruit be used in preparing for it, in rendering it possible. This creative power works with elements, with materials; what if it has not those materials, those elements, ready for its use? In that case it must surely wait till they are ready. Now, in literature,—I will limit myself to literature, for it is about literature that the question arises,—the elements with which the creative power works are ideas; the best ideas on every matter which literature touches, current at the time; at any rate we may lay it down as certain that in modern literature no manifestation of the creative power not working with these can be very important or fruitful. And I say *current* at the time, not merely accessible at the time; for creative literary genius does not principally show itself in discovering new ideas, that is rather the business of the philosopher; the grand work of literary genius is a work of synthesis and exposition, not of analysis and discovery; its gift lies in the faculty of being happily inspired by a certain intellectual and spiritual atmosphere, by a certain order of ideas, when it finds itself in them; of dealing divinely with these ideas, presenting them in the most effective and attractive combinations, making beautiful works with them, in short. But it must have the atmosphere, it must find itself amidst the order of ideas, in order to work freely; and these it is not so easy to command. This is why great creative epochs in literature are so rare; this is why there is so much that is unsatisfactory in the productions of many men of real genius; because, for the creation of a master-work of literature two powers must concur, the power of the man and the power of the moment, and the man is not enough without the moment; the creative power has, for its happy exercise, appointed elements, and those elements are not in its own control.

Nay, they are more within the control of the critical power. It is the business of the critical power, as I said in the words already quoted, "in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is." Thus it tends, at last, to make an intellectual situation of which the creative power can profitably avail itself. It tends to establish an order of ideas, if not absolutely true, yet true by comparison with that which it displaces; to make the best ideas prevail. Presently these new ideas reach society, the touch of truth is the touch of life, and there is a stir and growth everywhere; out of this stir and growth come the creative epochs of literature.

Or, to narrow our range, and quit these considerations of the general march of genius and of society,—considerations which are apt to become too abstract and impalpable,—every one can see that a poet, for instance, ought to know life and the world before dealing with them in poetry; and life and the world being in modern times, very complex things, the creation of a modern poet, to be worth much, implies a great critical effort behind it; else it would be a comparatively poor, barren, and short-lived affair. This is why Byron's poetry had so little endurance in it, and Goethe's so much; both had a great productive power, but Goethe's was nourished by a great critical effort providing the true materials for it, and Byron's was not; Goethe knew life and the world, the poet's necessary subjects, much more comprehensively and thoroughly than Byron. He knew a great deal more of them, and he knew them much more as they really are.

It has long seemed to me that the burst of creative activity in our literature, through the first quarter of this century, had about it in fact something premature; and that from this cause its productions are doomed, most of them, in spite of the sanguine hopes which accompanied and do still accompany them, to prove hardly more lasting than the productions of far less splendid epochs. And this prematureness comes from its having proceeded without having its proper data, without sufficient materials to work with. In other words, the English poetry of the first quarter of this century, with plenty of energy, plenty of creative force, did not know enough. This makes Byron so empty of matter, Shelley so incoherent, Wordsworth even, profound as he is, yet so wanting in completeness and variety. Wordsworth cared little for books, and disparaged Goethe. I admire Wordsworth, as he is, so much that I cannot wish him different; and it is vain, no doubt, to imagine such a man different from what he is, to suppose that he could have been different; but surely the one thing wanting to make Wordsworth an even greater poet than he is,—his thought richer, and his influence of wider application,—was that he should have read more books, among them, no doubt, those of that Goethe whom he disparaged without reading him. But to speak of books and reading may easily lead to a misunderstanding here. It was not really books and reading that lacked to our poetry at this epoch; Shelley had plenty of reading, Coleridge had immense reading. Pindar and Sophocles—as we all say so glibly, and often with so little discernment of the real import of what we are saying—had not many books; Shakspeare was no deep reader. True; but in the Greece of Pindar and Sophocles, in the England of Shakspeare, the poet lived in a current of ideas in the highest degree animating and nourishing to the creative power; society was, in the fullest measure, permeated by fresh thought, intelligent and alive; and this state of things is the true basis for the creative power's exercise, in this it finds its data, its materials, truly ready for its hand; all the books and reading in the world are only valuable as they are helps to this. Even when this does not actually exist, books and reading may enable a man to construct a kind of semblance of it in his own mind, a world of knowledge and intelligence in which he may live and work; this is by no means an equivalent to the artist for the nationally diffused life and thought of the epochs of Sophocles or Shakspeare; but, besides that it may be a means of preparation for such epochs, it does really constitute, if many share in it, a quickening and sustaining atmosphere of great value. Such an atmosphere the many-sided learning and the long and widely-combined critical effort of Germany formed for Goethe, when he lived and worked. There was no national glow of life and thought there, as in the Athens of Pericles or the England of Elizabeth. That was the poet's weakness. But there was a sort of equivalent for it in the complete culture and unfettered thinking of a large body of Germans. That was his strength. In the England of the first quarter of this century there was neither a national glow of life and thought, such as we had in the age of Elizabeth, nor yet a culture and a force of learning and criticism such as were to be found in Germany. Therefore the creative power of poetry wanted, for success in the highest sense, materials and a basis; a thorough interpretation of the world was necessarily denied to it.

At first sight it seems strange that out of the immense stir of the French Revolution and its age should not have come a crop of works of genius equal to that which came out of the stir of the great productive time of Greece, or out of that of the Renaissance, with its powerful episode the Reformation. But the truth is that the stir of the French Revolution took a character which essentially distinguished it from such movements as these. These were, in the main, disinterestedly intellectual and spiritual movements; movements in which the human spirit looked for its satisfaction in itself and in the increased play of its own activity: the French Revolution took a political, practical character. This Revolution—the object of so much blind love and so much blind hatred,—found indeed its motive-power in the intelligence of men, and not in their practical sense;—this is what distinguishes it from the English Revolution of Charles the First's time; this is what makes it a more spiritual event than our Revolution, an event of much more powerful and world-wide interest, though practically less successful—it appeals to an order of ideas which are universal, certain, permanent. 1789 asked of a thing, Is it rational? 1642 asked of a thing, Is it legal? or, when it went furthest, Is it according to conscience? This is the English fashion, a fashion to be treated, within its own sphere, with the highest respect; for its success, within its own sphere, has been prodigious. But what is law in one place is not law in another; what is law here to-day is not law even here to-morrow; and as for conscience, what is binding on one man's conscience is not binding on another's, the old woman who threw her stool at the head of the surpliced minister in the Tron Church at Edinburgh obeyed an impulse to which millions of the human race may be permitted to remain strangers. But the prescriptions of reason are absolute, unchanging, of universal validity; *to count by tens is the easiest way of counting*—that is a proposition of which every one, from here to the Antipodes, feels the force; at least I should say so if we did not live in a country where it is not impossible that any morning we may find a letter in the *Times* declaring that a decimal coinage is an absurdity. That a whole nation should have been penetrated with an enthusiasm for pure reason, and with an ardent zeal for making its prescriptions triumph, is a very remarkable thing, when we consider how little of mind, or anything so worthy and quickening as mind, comes into the motives which alone, in general, *impel* great masses of men. In spite of the extravagant direction given to this enthusiasm, in spite of the crimes and follies in which it lost itself, the French Revolution derives from the force, truth, and universality of the ideas which it took for its law, and from the passion with which it could inspire a multitude for these ideas, a unique and still living power; it is—it will probably long remain—the greatest, the most animating event in history. And as no sincere passion for the things of the mind, even though it turn out in many respects an unfortunate passion, is ever quite thrown away and quite barren of good, France has reaped from hers one fruit, the natural and legitimate fruit, though not precisely the grand fruit she expected: she is the country in Europe where *the people* is most alive.

But the mania for giving an immediate political and practical application to all these fine ideas of the reason was fatal. Here an Englishman is in his element: on this theme we can all go for hours. And all we are in the habit of saying on it has undoubtedly a great deal of truth. Ideas cannot be too much prized in and for themselves, cannot be too much lived with; but to transport them abruptly into the world of politics and practice, violently to revolutionise this world to their bidding,—that is quite another thing. There is the world of ideas and there is the world of practice; the French are often for suppressing the one and the English the other; but neither is to be suppressed. A member of the House of Commons said to me the other day: "That a thing is an anomaly, I consider to be no objection to it whatever." I venture to think he was wrong; that a thing is an anomaly *is* an objection to it, but absolutely and in the sphere of ideas: it is not necessarily, under such and such circumstances, or at such and such a moment, an objection to it in the sphere of politics and practice. Joubert has said beautifully: "C'est la force et le droit qui réglent toutes choses dans le monde; la force en attendant le droit." Force and right are the governors of this world; force till right is ready. *Force till right is ready;* and till right is ready, force, the existing order of things, is justified, is the legitimate ruler. But right is something moral, and implies inward recognition, free assent of the will; we are not ready for right,—*right,* so far as we are concerned, *is not ready,*—until we have attained this sense of seeing it and willing it. The way in which for us it may change and transform force, the existing order of things, and become, in its turn, the legitimate ruler of the world, will depend on the way in which, when our time comes, we see it and will it. Therefore for other people enamoured of their own newly discerned right, to attempt to impose it upon us as ours, and violently to substitute their right for our force, is an act of tyranny, and to be resisted. It sets at nought the second great half of our maxim, *force till right is ready.* This was the grand error of the French Revolution; and its movement of ideas, by quitting the intellectual sphere and rushing furiously into the political sphere, ran, indeed, a prodigious and memorable course, but produced no such intellectual fruit as the movement of ideas of the Renaissance, and created, in opposition to itself, what I may call an *epoch of concentration.* The great force of that epoch of concentration was England; and the great voice of that epoch of concentration was Burke. It is the fashion to treat Burke's writings on the French Revolution as superannuated and conquered by the event; as the eloquent but unphilosophical tirades of bigotry and prejudice. I will not deny that they are often disfigured by the violence and passion of the moment, and that in some directions Burke's view was bounded, and his observation therefore at fault, but on the whole, and for those who can make the needful corrections, what distinguishes these writings is their profound, permanent, fruitful, philosophical truth, they contain the true philosophy of an epoch of concentration, dissipate the heavy atmosphere which its own nature is apt to engender round it, and make its resistance rational instead of mechanical.

But Burke is so great because, almost alone in England, he brings thought to bear upon politics, he saturates politics with thought; it is his accident that his ideas were at the service of an epoch of concentration, not of an epoch of expansion; it is his characteristic that he so lived by ideas, and had such a source of them welling up within him, that he could float even an epoch of concentration and English Tory politics with them. It does not hurt him that Dr Price and the Liberals were displeased with him; it does not even hurt him that George the Third and the Tories were enchanted with him. His greatness is that he lived in a world which neither English Liberalism nor English Toryism is apt to enter;—the world of ideas, not the world of catchwords and party habits. So far is it from being really true of him that he "to party gave up what was meant for mankind," that at the very end of his fierce struggle with the French Revolution, after all his invectives against its false pretensions, hollowness, and madness, with his sincere conviction of its mischievousness, he can close a memorandum on the best means of combating it, some of the last pages he ever wrote,—the *Thoughts on French Affairs*, in December 1791,—with these striking words:—

"The evil is stated, in my opinion, as it exists. The remedy must be where power, wisdom, and information, I hope, are more united with good intentions than they can be with me. I have done with this subject, I believe, for ever. It has given me many anxious moments for the last two years. *If a great change is to be made in human affairs, the minds of men will be fitted to it; the general opinions and feelings will draw that way. Every fear, every hope will forward it; and then they who persist in opposing this mighty current in human affairs, will appear rather to resist the decrees of Providence itself, than the mere designs of men. They will not be resolute and firm, but perverse and obstinate.*"

That return of Burke upon himself has always seemed to me one of the finest things in English literature, or indeed in any literature. That is what I call living by ideas: when one side of a question has long had your earnest support, when all your feelings are engaged, when you hear all round you no language but one, when your party talks this language like a steam-engine and can imagine no other,—still to be able to think, still to be irresistibly carried, if so it be, by the current of thought to the opposite side of the question, and, like Balaam, to be unable to speak anything *but what the Lord has put in your mouth.* I know nothing more striking, and I must add that I know nothing more un-English.

For the Englishman in general is like my friend the Member of Parliament, and believes, point-blank, that for a thing to be an anomaly is absolutely no objection to it whatever. He is like the Lord Auckland of Burke's day, who, in a memorandum on the French Revolution, talks of "certain miscreants, assuming the name of philosophers, who have presumed themselves capable of establishing a new system of society." The Englishman has been called a political animal, and he values what is political and practical so much that ideas easily become objects of dislike in his eyes, and thinkers "miscreants," because ideas and thinkers have rashly meddled with politics and practice. This would be all very well if the dislike and neglect confined themselves to ideas transported out of their own sphere, and meddling rashly with practice; but they are inevitably extended to ideas as such, and to the whole life of intelligence; practice is everything, a free play of the mind is nothing. The notion of the free play of the mind upon all subjects being a pleasure in itself, being an object of desire, being an essential provider of elements without which a nation's spirit, whatever compensations it may have for them, must, in the long run, die of inanition, hardly enters into an Englishman's thoughts. It is noticeable that the word *curiosity*, which in other languages is used in a good sense, to mean, as a high and fine quality of man's nature, just this disinterested love of a free play of the mind on all subjects, for its own sake,—it is noticeable, I say, that this word has in our language no sense of the kind, no sense but a rather bad and disparaging one. But criticism, real criticism, is essentially the exercise of this very quality; it obeys an instinct prompting it to try to know the best that is known and thought in the world, irrespectively of practice, politics, and everything of the kind; and to value knowledge and thought as they approach this best, without the intrusion of any other considerations whatever. This is an instinct for which there is, I think, little original sympathy in the practical English nature, and what there was of it has undergone a long benumbing period of check and suppression in the epoch of concentration which followed the French Revolution.

But epochs of concentration cannot well endure for ever; epochs of expansion, in the due course of things, follow them. Such an epoch of expansion seems to be opening in this country. In the first place all danger of a hostile forcible pressure of foreign ideas upon our practice has long disappeared; like the traveller in the fable, therefore, we begin to wear our cloak a little more loosely. Then, with a long peace the ideas of Europe steal gradually and amicably in, and mingle, though in infinitesimally small quantities at a time, with our own notions. Then, too, in spite of all that is said about the absorbing and brutalising influence of our passionate material progress, it seems to me indisputable that this progress is likely, though not certain, to lead in the end to an apparition of intellectual life; and that man, after he has made himself perfectly comfortable and has now to determine what to do with himself next, may begin to remember that he has a mind, and that the mind may be made the source of great pleasure. I grant it is mainly the privilege of faith, at present, to discern this end to our railways, our business, and our fortune-making; but we shall see if, here as elsewhere, faith is not in the end the true prophet. Our ease, our travelling, and our unbounded liberty to hold just as hard and securely as we please to the practice to which our notions have given birth, all tend to beget an inclination to deal a little more freely with these notions themselves, to canvass them a little, to penetrate a little into their real nature. Flutterings of curiosity, in the foreign sense of the word, appear amongst us, and it is in these that criticism must look to find its account. Criticism first; a time of true creative activity, perhaps,—which, as I have said, must inevitably be preceded amongst us by a time of criticism,—hereafter, when criticism has done its work.

It is of the last importance that English criticism should clearly discern what rules for its course, in order to avail itself of the field now opening to it, and to produce fruit for the future, it ought to take. The rules may be given in one word; by being *disinterested.* And how is it to be disinterested? By keeping aloof from practice; by resolutely following the law of its own nature, which is to be a free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches; by steadily refusing to lend itself to any of those ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas, which plenty of people will be sure to attach to them, which perhaps ought often to be attached to them, which in this country at any rate are certain to be attached to them quite sufficiently, but which criticism has really nothing to do with. Its business is, as I have said, simply to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas. Its business is to do this with inflexible honesty, with due ability; but its business is to do no more, and to leave alone all questions of practical consequences and applications, questions which will never fail to have due prominence given to them. Else criticism, besides being really false to its own nature, merely continues in the old rut which it has hitherto followed in this country, and will certainly miss the chance now given to it. For what is at present the bane of criticism in this country? It is that practical considerations cling to it and stifle it; it subserves interests not its own; our organs of criticism are organs of men and parties having practical ends to serve, and with them those practical ends are the first thing and the play of mind the second; so much play of mind as is compatible with the prosecution of those practical ends is all that is wanted. An organ like the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, having for its main function to understand and utter the best that is known and thought in the world, existing, it may be said, as just an organ for a free play of the mind, we have not; but we have the *Edinburgh Review*, existing as an organ of the old Whigs, and for as much play of the mind as may suit its being that; we have the *Quarterly Review*, existing as an organ of the Tories, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that; we have the *British Quarterly Review*, existing as an organ of the political Dissenters, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that; we have the *Times*, existing as an organ of the common, satisfied, well-to-do Englishman, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that. And so on through all the various factions, political and religious, of our society; every faction has, as such, its organ of criticism, but the notion of combining all fractions in the common pleasure of a free disinterested play of mind meets with no favour. Directly this play of mind wants to have more scope, and to forget the pressure of practical considerations a little, it is checked, it is made to feel the chain. We saw this the other day in the extinction, so much to be regretted, of the *Home and Foreign Review;* perhaps in no organ of criticism in this country was there so much knowledge, so much play of mind; but these could not save it. The *Dublin Review* subordinates play of mind to the practical business of Roman Catholicism, and lives. It must needs be that men should act in sects and parties, that each of these sects and parties should have its organ, and should make this organ subserve the interests of its action; but it would be well, too, that there should be a criticism, not the minister of these interests, not their enemy, but absolutely and entirely independent of them. No other criticism will ever attain any real authority or make any real way towards its end,—the creating a current of true and fresh ideas.

It is because criticism has so little kept in the pure intellectual sphere, has so little detached itself from practice, has been so directly polemical and controversial, that it has so ill accomplished, in this country, its best spiritual work; which is to keep man from a self-satisfaction which is retarding and vulgarising, to lead him towards perfection, by making his mind dwell upon what is excellent in itself, and the absolute beauty and fitness of things. A polemical practical criticism makes men blind even to the ideal imperfection of their practice, makes them willingly assert its ideal perfection, in order the better to secure it against attack; and clearly this is narrowing and baneful for them. If they were reassured on the practical side, speculative considerations of ideal perfection they might be brought to entertain, and their spiritual horizon would thus gradually widen. Mr Adderley says to the Warwickshire farmers:—

"Talk of the improvement of breed! Why, the race we ourselves represent, the men and women, the old Anglo-Saxon race, are the best breed in the whole world. . . . The absence of a too enervating climate, too unclouded skies, and a too luxurious nature, has produced so vigorous a race of people, and has rendered us so superior to all the world."

Mr Roebuck says to the Sheffield cutlers:—

"I look around me and ask what is the state of England? Is not property safe? Is not every man able to say what he likes? Can you not walk from one end of England to the other in perfect security? I ask you whether, the world over or in past history, there is anything like it? Nothing. I pray that our unrivalled happiness may last."

Now obviously there is a peril for poor human nature in words and thoughts of such exuberant self-satisfaction, until we find ourselves safe in the streets of the Celestial City.

> "Das wenige verschwindet leicht dem Blicke
> Der vorwärts sieht, wie viel noch übrig bleibt—"

says Goethe; "the little that is done seems nothing when we look forward and see how much we have yet to do." Clearly this is a better line of reflection for weak humanity, so long as it remains on this earthly field of labour and trial. But neither Mr Adderley nor Mr Roebuck is by nature inaccessible to considerations of this sort. They only lose sight of them owing to the controversial life we all lead, and the practical form which all speculation takes with us. They have in view opponents whose aim is not ideal, but practical; and in their zeal to uphold their own practice against these innovators, they go so far as even to attribute to this practice an ideal perfection. Somebody has been wanting to introduce a six-pound franchise, or to abolish church-rates, or to collect agricultural statistics by force, or to diminish local self-government. How natural, in reply to such proposals, very likely improper or ill-timed, to go a little beyond the mark and to say stoutly, "Such a race of people as we stand, so superior to all the world! The old Anglo-Saxon race, the best breed in the whole world! I pray that our unrivalled happiness may last! I ask you whether, the world over or in past history, there is anything like it?" And so long as criticism answers this dithyramb by insisting that the old Anglo-Saxon race would be still more superior to all others if it had no church-rates, or that our unrivalled happiness would last yet longer with a six-pound franchise, so long will the strain, "The best breed in the whole world!" swell louder and louder, everything ideal and refining will be lost out of sight, and both the assailed and their critics will remain in a sphere, to say the truth, perfectly unintelligent, a sphere in which spiritual progression is impossible. But let criticism leave church-rates and the franchise alone, and in the most candid spirit, without a single lurking thought of practical innovation, confront with our dithyramb this paragraph on which I stumbled in a newspaper immediately after reading Mr Roebuck;—

"A shocking child murder has just been committed at Nottingham. A girl named Wragg left the workhouse there on Saturday morning with her young illegitimate child. The child was soon afterwards found dead on Mapperly Hills, having been strangled. Wragg is in custody."

Nothing but that; but, in juxtaposition with the absolute eulogies of Mr Adderley and Mr Roebuck, how eloquent, how suggestive are those few lines! "Our old Anglo-Saxon breed, the best in the whole world!"—how much that is harsh and ill-favoured there is in this best! *Wragg!* If we are to talk of ideal perfection, of "the best in the whole world," has any one reflected what a touch of grossness in our race, what an original shortcoming in the more delicate spiritual perceptions, is shown by the natural growth amongst us of such hideous names,—Higginbottom, Stiggins, Bugg! In Ionia and Attica they were luckier in this respect than "the best race in the world;" by the Ilissus there was no Wragg, poor thing! And "our unrivalled happiness;"—what an element of grimness, bareness, and hideousness mixes with it and blurs it; the workhouse, the dismal Mapperly Hills,—how dismal those who have seen them will remember;—the gloom, the smoke, the cold, the strangled illegitimate child! "I ask you whether, the world over or in past history, there is anything like it?" It may be so, one is inclined to answer; but at any rate, in that case, the world is very much to be pitied. And the final touch,—short, bleak and inhuman: *Wragg is in custody.* The sex lost in the confusion of our unrivalled happiness;

or shall I say, the superfluous Christian name lopped off by the straightforward vigour of our old Anglo-Saxon breed? There is profit for the spirit in such contrasts as this; criticism serves the cause of perfection by establishing them. By eluding sterile conflict, by refusing to remain in the sphere where alone narrow and relative conceptions have any worth and validity, criticism may diminish its momentary importance, but only in this way has it a chance of gaining admittance for those wider and more perfect conceptions to which all its duty is really owed. Mr Roebuck will have a poor opinion of an adversary who replies to his defiant songs of triumph only by murmuring under his breath, *Wragg is in custody;* but in no other way will these songs of triumph be induced gradually to moderate themselves, to get rid of what in them is excessive and offensive, and to fall into a softer and truer key.

It will be said that it is a very subtle and indirect action which I am thus prescribing for criticism, and that, by embracing in this manner the Indian virtue of detachment and abandoning the sphere of practical life, it condemns itself to a slow and obscure work. Slow and obscure it may be, but it is the only proper work of criticism. The mass of mankind will never have any ardent zeal for seeing things as they are; very inadequate ideas will always satisfy them. On these inadequate ideas reposes, and must repose, the general practice of the world. That is as much as saying that whoever sets himself to see things as they are will find himself one of a very small circle; but it is only by this small circle resolutely doing its own work that adequate ideas will ever get current at all. The rush and roar of practical life will always have a dizzying and attracting effect upon the most collected spectator, and tend to draw him into its vortex; most of all will this be the case where that life is so powerful as it is in England. But it is only by remaining collected, and refusing to lend himself to the point of view of the practical man, that the critic can do the practical man any service; and it is only by the greatest sincerity in pursuing his own course, and by at last convincing even the practical man of his sincerity, that he can escape misunderstandings which perpetually threaten him.

For the practical man is not apt for fine distinctions, and yet in these distinctions truth and the highest culture greatly find their account. But it is not easy to lead a practical man,—unless you reassure him as to your practical intentions, you have no chance of leading him,—to see that a thing which he has always been used to look at from one side only, which he greatly values, and which, looked at from that side, more than deserves, perhaps, all the prizing and admiring which he bestows upon it,—that this thing, looked at from another side, may appear much less beneficent and beautiful, and yet retain all its claims to our practical allegiance. Where shall we find language innocent enough, how shall we make the spotless purity of our intentions evident enough, to enable us to say to the political Englishman that the British constitution itself, which, seen from the practical side, looks such a magnificent organ of progress and virtue, seen from the speculative side,—with its compromises, its love of facts, its horror of theory, its studied avoidance of clear thoughts,—that, seen from this side, our august constitution sometimes looks,—forgive me, shade of Lord Somers!—a colossal machine for the manufacture of Philistines? How is Cobbett to say this and not be misunderstood, blackened as he is with the smoke of a lifelong conflict in the field of political practice? how is Mr Carlyle to say it and not be misunderstood, after his furious raid into this field with his *Latter-day Pamphlets?* how is Mr Ruskin, after his pugnacious political economy? I say, the critic must keep out of the region of immediate practice in the political, social, humanitarian sphere, if he wants to make a beginning for that more free speculative treatment of things, which may perhaps one day make its benefits felt even in this sphere, but in a natural and thence irresistible manner.

Do what he will, however, the critic will still remain exposed to frequent misunderstandings, and nowhere so much as in this country. For here people are particularly indisposed even to comprehend that without this free disinterested treatment of things, truth and the highest culture are out of the question. So immersed are they in practical life, so accustomed to take all their notions from this life and its processes, that they are apt to think that truth and culture themselves can be reached by the processes of this life, and that it is an impertinent singularity to think of reaching them in any other. "We are all *terræ filii*," cries their eloquent advocate; "all Philistines together. Away with the notion of proceeding by any other way than the way dear to the Philistines; let us have a social movement, let us organise and combine a party to pursue truth and new thought, let us call it *the liberal party*, and let us all stick to each other, and back each other up. Let us have no nonsense about independent criticism, and intellectual delicacy, and the few and the many. Don't let us trouble ourselves about foreign thought; we shall invent the whole thing for ourselves as we go along. If one of us speaks well, applaud him; if one of us speaks ill, applaud him too; we are all in the same movement, we are all liberals, we are all in pursuit of truth." In this way the pursuit of truth becomes really a social, practical, pleasurable affair, almost requiring a chairman, a secretary, and advertisements; with the excitement of a little resistance, an occasional scandal, to give the happy sense of difficulty overcome; but, in 'general, plenty of bustle and very little thought. To act is so easy, as Goethe says; to think is so hard! It is true that the critic has many temptations to go with the stream, to make one of the party movement, one of these *terræ filii;* it seems ungracious to refuse to be a *terræ filius*, when so many excellent people are; but the critic's duty is to refuse, or, if resistance is vain, at least to cry with Obermann: *Périssons en résistant.*

How serious a matter it is to try and resist, I had ample opportunity of experiencing when I ventured some time ago to criticise the celebrated first volume of Bishop Colenso. The echoes of the storm which was then raised I still, from time to time, hear grumbling round me. That storm arose out of a misunderstanding almost inevitable. It is a result of no little culture to attain to a clear perception that science and religion are two wholly different things; the multitude will for ever confuse them; but happily that is of no great real importance, for while it imagines itself to live by its false science, it does really live by its true religion. Dr Colenso, however, in his first volume did all he could to strengthen the confusion, and to make it dangerous. He did this with the best intentions, I freely admit, and with the most candid ignorance that this was the natural effect of what he was doing; but, says Joubert, "Ignorance, which in matters of morals extenuates the crime, is itself, in intellectual matters, a crime of the first order." I criticised Bishop Colenso's speculative confusion. Immediately there was a cry raised: "What is this? here is a liberal attacking a liberal. Do not you belong to the movement? are not you a friend of truth? Is not Bishop Colenso in pursuit of truth? then speak with proper respect of his book. Dr Stanley is another friend of truth, and you speak with proper respect of his book; why make these invidious differences? both books are excellent, admirable, liberal; Bishop Colenso's perhaps the most, because it is the boldest, and will have the best practical consequences for the liberal cause. Do you want to encourage to the attack of a brother liberal his, and your, and our implacable enemies, the *Church and State Review* or the *Record*,—the High Church rhinoceros and the Evangelical hyæna? Be silent, therefore; or rather speak, speak as loud as ever you can! and go into ecstasies over the eight hundred and odd pigeons." But criticism cannot follow this coarse and indiscriminate method. It is unfortunately possible for a man in pursuit of truth to write a book which reposes upon a false conception. Even the practical consequences of a book are to genuine criticism no recommendation of it, if the book is, in the highest sense, blundering. I see that a lady who herself, too, is in pursuit of truth, and who writes with great ability, but a little too much, perhaps, under the influence of the practical spirit of the English liberal movement, classes Bishop Colenso's book and M. Renan's together, in her survey of the religious state of Europe, as facts of the same order, works, both of them, of "great importance;" "great ability, power, and skill;" Bishop Colenso's, perhaps, the most powerful; at least, Miss Cobbe gives special expression to her gratitude that to Bishop Colenso "has been given the strength to grasp, and the courage to teach, truths of such deep import." In the same way, more than one popular writer has compared him to Luther. Now it is just this kind of false estimate which the critical spirit is, it seems to me, bound to resist. It is really the strongest possible proof of the low ebb at which, in England, the critical spirit is, that while the critical hit in the religious literature of Germany is Dr Strauss's book, in that of France M. Renan's book, the book of Bishop

Colenso is the critical hit in the religious literature of England. Bishop Colenso's book reposes on a total misconception of the essential elements of the religious problem, as that problem is now presented for solution. To criticism therefore, which seeks to have the best that is known and thought on this problem, it is, however well meant, of no importance whatever. M. Renan's book attempts a new synthesis of the elements furnished to us by the Four Gospels. It attempts, in my opinion, a synthesis, perhaps premature, perhaps impossible, certainly not successful. Perhaps we shall always have to acquiesce in Fleury's sentence on such recastings of the Gospel-story: *Quiconque s'imagine la pouvoir mieux écrire, ne l'entend pas.* M. Renan had himself passed by anticipation a like sentence on his own work, when he said: "If a new presentation of the character of Jesus were offered to me, I would not have it; its very clearness would be, in my opinion, the best proof of its insufficiency." His friends may with perfect truth rejoin that at the sight of the Holy Land, and of the actual scene of the Gospel-story, all the current of M. Renan's thoughts may have naturally changed, and a new casting of that story irresistibly suggested itself to him; and that this is just a case for applying Cicero's maxim: Change of mind is not inconsistency—*nemo doctus unquam mutationem consilii inconstantiam dixit esse.* Nevertheless, for criticism, M. Renan's first thought must still be the truer one, as long as his new casting so fails more fully to commend itself, more fully (to use Coleridge's happy phrase about the Bible) to *find* us. Still M. Renan's attempt is, for criticism, of the most real interest and importance, since, with all its difficulty, a fresh synthesis of the New Testament *data*, is the very essence of the religious problem, as now presented; and only by efforts in this direction can it receive a solution.

Again, in the same spirit in which she judges Bishop Colenso, Miss Cobbe, like so many earnest liberals of our practical race, both here and in America, herself sets vigorously about a positive re-construction of religion, about making a religion of the future out of hand, or at least setting about making it, we must not rest, she and they are always thinking and saying, in negative criticism, we must be creative and constructive; hence we have such works as her recent *Religious Duty*, and works still more considerable, perhaps, by others, which will be in every one's mind. These works often have much ability; they often spring out of sincere convictions, and a sincere wish to do good; and they sometimes, perhaps, do good. Their fault is (if I may be permitted to say so) one which they have in common with the British College of Health, in the New Road. Every one knows the British College of Health; it is that building with the lion and the statue of the Goddess Hygeia before it; at least I am sure about the lion, though I am not absolutely certain about the Goddess Hygeia. This building does credit, perhaps, to the resources of Dr Morrison and his disciples; but it falls a good deal short of one's idea of what a British College of Health ought to be. In England, where we hate public interference and love individual enterprise, we have a whole crop of places like the British College of Health; the grand name without the grand thing. Unluckily, creditable to individual enterprise as they are, they tend to impair our taste by making us forget what more grandiose, noble, or beautiful character properly belongs to a public institution. The same may be said of the religions of the future of Miss Cobbe and others. Creditable, like the British College of Health, to the resources of their authors, they yet tend to make us forget what more grandiose, noble, or beautiful character properly belongs to religious constructions. The historic religions, with all their faults, have had this; it certainly belongs to the religious sentiment, when it truly flowers, to have this; and we impoverish our spirit if we allow a religion of the future without it. What then is the duty of criticism here? To take the practical point of view, to applaud the liberal movement and all its works,—its New Road religions of the future into the bargain,—for their general utility's sake? By no means; but to be perpetually dissatisfied with these works, while they perpetually fall short of a high and perfect ideal.

In criticism, these are elementary laws; but they never can be popular, and in this country they have been very little followed, and one meets with immense obstacles in following them. That is a reason for asserting them again and again. Criticism must maintain its independence of the practical spirit and its aims. Even with well-meant efforts of the practical spirit it must express dissatisfaction, if in the sphere of the ideal they seem impoverishing and limiting. It must not hurry on to the goal because of its practical importance. It must be patient, and know how to wait; and flexible, and know how to attach itself to things and how to withdraw from them. It must be apt to study and praise elements that for the fulness of spiritual perfection are wanted, even though they belong to a power which in the practical sphere may be maleficent. It must be apt to discern the spiritual shortcomings or illusions of powers that in the practical sphere may be beneficent. And this without any notion of favouring or injuring, in the practical sphere, one power or the other; without any notion of playing off, in this sphere, one power against the other. When one looks, for instance, at the English Divorce Court,—an institution which perhaps has its practical conveniences, but which in the ideal sphere is so hideous; an institution which neither makes divorce impossible nor makes it decent, which allows a man to get rid of his wife, or a wife of her husband, but makes them drag one another first, for the public edification, through a mire of unutterable infamy,—when one looks at this charming institution, I say, with its crowded trials, its newspaper reports, and its money compensations, this institution in which the gross unregenerate British Philistine has indeed stamped an image of himself,—one may be permitted to find the marriage theory of Catholicism refreshing and elevating. Or when Protestantism, in virtue of its supposed rational and intellectual origin, gives the law to criticism too magisterially, criticism may and must remind it that its pretensions, in this respect, are illusive and do it harm; that the Reformation was a moral rather than an intellectual event; that Luther's theory of grace no more exactly reflects the mind of the spirit than Bossuet's philosophy of history reflects it; and that there is no more antecedent probability of the Bishop of Durham's stock of ideas being agreeable to perfect reason than of Pope Pius the Ninth's. But criticism will not on that account forget the achievements of Protestantism in the practical and moral sphere; nor that, even in the intellectual sphere, Protestantism, though in a blind and stumbling manner, carried forward the Renaissance, while Catholicism threw itself violently across its path.

I lately heard a man of thought and energy contrasting the want of ardour and movement which he now found amongst young men in this country with what he remembered in his own youth, twenty years ago. "What reformers we were then!" he exclaimed; "what a zeal we had! how we canvassed every institution in Church and State, and were prepared to remodel them all on first principles!" He was inclined to regret, as a spiritual flagging, the lull which he saw. I am disposed rather to regard it as a pause in which the turn to a new mode of spiritual progress is being accomplished. Everything was long seen, by the young and ardent amongst us, in inseparable connection with politics and practical life. We have pretty well exhausted the benefits of seeing things in this connection, we have got all that can be got by so seeing them. Let us try a more disinterested mode of seeing them; let us betake ourselves more to the serener life of the mind and spirit. This life, too, may have its excesses and dangers; but they are not for us at present. Let us think of quietly enlarging our stock of true and fresh ideas, and not, as soon us we get an idea or half an idea, be running out with it into the street, and trying to make it rule there. Our ideas will, in the end, shape the world all the better for maturing a little. Perhaps in fifty years' time it will in the English House of Commons be an objection to an institution that it is an anomaly, and my friend the Member of Parliament will shudder in his grave. But let us in the meanwhile rather endeavour that in twenty years' time it may, in English literature, be an objection to a proposition that it is absurd. That will be a change so vast, that the imagination almost fails to grasp it. *Ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo.* R

If I have insisted so much on the course which criticism must take where politics and religion are concerned, it is because, where these burning matters are in question, it is most likely to go astray. In general, its course is determined for it by the idea which is the law of its being; the idea of a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world, and thus to establish a current of fresh and true ideas. By the very nature of things, as England is not all the world, much of the best that is known and thought in the world cannot be of English growth, must be foreign; by the nature of things, again, it is just this that we are least likely to know, while English thought is streaming in upon us from all sides, and takes excellent care that we shall not be ignorant of its existence; the English critic, therefore, must dwell much on foreign thought, and with particular heed on any part of it, which, while significant and fruitful in itself, is for any reason specially likely to escape him. Judging is often spoken of as the critic's one business, and so in some sense it is; but the judgment which almost insensibly forms itself in a fair and clear mind, along with fresh knowledge, is the valuable one; and thus knowledge, and ever fresh knowledge, must be the critic's great concern for himself; and it is by communicating fresh knowledge, and letting his own judgment pass along with it,—but insensibly, and in the second place, not the first, as a sort of companion and clue, not as an abstract lawgiver,—that he will generally do most good to his readers. Sometimes, no doubt, for the sake of establishing an author's place in literature, and his relation to a central standard (and if this is not done, how are we to get at our *best in the world?*) criticism may have to deal with a subject-matter so familiar that fresh knowledge is out of the question, and then it must be all judgment; an enunciation and detailed application of principles. Here the great safeguard is never to let oneself become abstract, always to retain an intimate and lively consciousness of the truth of what one is saying, and, the moment this fails us, to be sure that something is wrong. Still, under all circumstances, this mere judgment and application of principles is, in itself, not the most satisfactory work to the critic; like mathematics, it is tautological, and cannot well give us, like fresh learning, the sense of creative activity. To have this sense is, as I said at the beginning, the great happiness and the great proof of being alive, and it is not denied to criticism to have it; but then criticism must be sincere, simple, flexible, ardent, ever widening its knowledge. Then it may have, in no contemptible measure, a joyful sense of creative activity; a sense which a man of insight and conscience will prefer to what he might derive from a poor, starved, fragmentary, inadequate creation. And at some epochs no other creation is possible.

Still, in full measure, the sense of creative activity belongs only to genuine creation; in literature we must never forget that. But what true man of letters ever can forget it? It is no such common matter for a gifted nature to come into possession of a current of true and living ideas, and to produce amidst the inspiration of them, that we are likely to underrate it. The epochs of Æschylus and Shakspeare make us feel their pre-eminence. In an epoch like those is, no doubt, the true life of literature; there is the promised land, towards which criticism can only beckon. That promised land it will not be ours to enter, and we shall die in the wilderness: but to have desired to enter it, to have saluted it from afar, is already, perhaps, the best distinction among contemporaries; it will certainly be the best title to esteem with posterity.

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II

THE LITERARY INFLUENCE OF ACADEMIES

It is impossible to put down a book like the history of the French Academy, by Pellisson and D'Olivet, which M. Charles Livet has lately re-edited, without being led to reflect upon the absence, in our own country, of any institution like the French Academy, upon the probable causes of this absence, and upon its results. A thousand voices will be ready to tell us that this absence is a signal mark of our national superiority; that it is in great part owing to this absence that the exhilarating words of Lord Macaulay, lately given to the world by his very clever nephew, Mr Trevelyan, are so profoundly true: "It may safely be said that the literature now extant in the English language is of far greater value than all the literature which three hundred years ago was extant in all the languages of the world together." I daresay this is so; only, remembering Spinoza's maxim that the two great banes of humanity are self-conceit and the laziness coming from self-conceit, I think it may do us good, instead of resting in our pre-eminence with perfect security, to look a little more closely why this is so, and whether it is so without any limitations.

But first of all I must give a very few words to the outward history of the French Academy. About the year 1629, seven or eight persons in Paris, fond of literature, formed themselves into a sort of little club to meet at one another's houses and discuss literary matters. Their meetings got talked of, and Cardinal Richelieu, then minister and all-powerful, heard of them. He himself had a noble passion for letters, and for all fine culture; he was interested by what he heard of the nascent society. Himself a man in the grand style, if ever man was, he had the insight to perceive what a potent instrument of the grand style was here to his hand. It was the beginning of a great century for France, the seventeenth; men's minds were working, the French language was forming. Richelieu sent to ask the members of the new society whether they would be willing to become a body with a public character holding regular meetings. Not without a little hesitation,—for apparently they found themselves very well as they were, and these seven or eight gentlemen of a social and literary turn were not perfectly at their ease as to what the great and terrible minister could want with them,—they consented. The favours of a man like Richelieu are not easily refused, whether they are honestly meant or no; but, this favour of Richelieu's was meant quite honestly. The Parliament, however, had its doubts of this. The Parliament had none of Richelieu's enthusiasm about letters and culture; it was jealous of the apparition of a new public body in the State; above all, of a body called into existence by Richelieu. The King's letters-patent, establishing and authorising the new society, were granted early in 1635; but, by the old constitution of France, these letters-patent required the verification of the Parliament. It was two years and a half—towards the autumn of 1637—before the Parliament would give it; and it then gave it only after pressing solicitations, and earnest assurances of the innocent intentions of the young Academy. Jocose people said that this society, with its mission to purify and embellish the language, filled with terror a body of lawyers like the French Parliament, the stronghold of barbarous jargon and of chicane.

This improvement of the language was in truth the declared grand aim for the operations of the Academy. Its statutes of foundation, approved by Richelieu before the royal edict establishing it was issued, say expressly: "The Academy's principal function shall be to work with all the care and all the diligence possible at giving sure rules to our language, and rendering it pure, eloquent, and capable of treating the arts and sciences." This zeal for making a nation's great instrument of thought,—its language,—correct and worthy, is undoubtedly a sign full of promise,—a weighty earnest of future power. It is said that Richelieu had it in his mind that French should succeed Latin in its general ascendency, as Latin had succeeded Greek; if it was so, even this wish has to some extent been fulfilled. But, at any rate, the *ethical* influences of style in language,

—its close relations, so often pointed out, with character,—are most important. Richelieu, a man of high culture, and, at the same time, of great character, felt them profoundly; and that he should have sought to regularise, strengthen, and perpetuate them by an institution for perfecting language, is alone a striking proof of his governing spirit and of his genius.

This was not all he had in his mind, however. The new Academy, now enlarged to a body of forty members, and meant to contain all the chief literary men of France, was to be a *literary tribunal*. The works of its members were to be brought before it previous to publication, were to be criticised by it, and finally, if it saw fit, to be published with its declared approbation. The works of other writers, not members of the Academy, might also, at the request of these writers themselves, be passed under the Academy's review. Besides this, in essays and discussions the Academy examined and judged works already published, whether by living or dead authors, and literary matters in general. The celebrated opinion on Corneille's *Cid*, delivered in 1637 by the Academy at Richelieu's urgent request, when this poem, which strongly occupied public attention, had been attacked by M. de Scudéry, shows how fully Richelieu designed his new creation to do duty as a supreme court of literature, and how early it in fact began to exercise this function. One[1] who had known Richelieu declared, after the Cardinal's death, that he had projected a yet greater institution than the Academy, a sort of grand European college of art, science, and literature, a Prytaneum, where the chief authors of all Europe should be gathered together in one central home, there to live in security, leisure, and honour;—that was a dream which will not bear to be pulled about too roughly. But the project of forming a high court of letters for France was no dream; Richelieu in great measure fulfilled it. This is what the Academy, by its idea, really is; this is what it has always tended to become; this is what it has, from time to time, really been; by being, or tending to be this, far more than even by what it has done for the language, it is of such importance in France. To give the law, the tone to literature, and that tone a high one, is its business. "Richelieu meant it," says M. Sainte-

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[1] La Mesnardière.

Beuve, "to be a *haut jury*,"—a jury the most choice and authoritative that could be found on all important literary matters in question before the public; to be, as it in fact became in the latter half of the eighteenth century, "a sovereign organ of opinion." "The duty of the Academy is," says M. Renan, "*maintenir la délicatesse de l'esprit français*"—to keep the fine quality of the French spirit unimpaired; it represents a kind of "*maîtrise en fait de bon ton*"—the authority of a recognised master in matters of tone and taste. "All ages," says M. Renan again, "have had their inferior literature; but the great danger of our time is that this inferior literature tends more and more to get the upper place. No one has the same advantage as the Academy for fighting against this mischief;" the Academy, which, as he says elsewhere, has even special facilities for "creating a form of intellectual culture *which shall impose itself on all around*." M. Sainte-Beuve and M. Renan are, both of them, very keen-sighted critics; and they show it signally by seizing and putting so prominently forward this character of the French Academy.

Such an effort to set up a recognised authority, imposing on us a high standard in matters of intellect and taste, has many enemies in human nature. We all of us like to go our own way, and not to be forced out of the atmosphere of commonplace habitual to most of us;—"*was uns alle bändigt*," says Goethe, "*das Gemeine*." We like to be suffered to lie comfortably in the old straw of our habits, especially of our intellectual habits, even though this straw may not be very clean and fine. But if the effort to limit this freedom of our lower nature finds, as it does and must find, enemies in human nature, it finds also auxiliaries in it. Out of the four great parts, says Cicero, of the *honestum*, or good, which forms the matter on which *officium*, or human duty, finds employment, one is the fixing of a *modus* and an *ordo*, a measure and an order, to fashion and wholesomely constrain our action, in order to lift it above the level it keeps if left to itself, and to bring it nearer to perfection. Man alone of living creatures, he says, goes feeling after "*quid sit* ordo, *quid sit quod* deceat, *in factis dictisque qui* modus"—the discovery of an *order*, a law of *good taste*, a *measure* for his words and actions. Other creatures submissively follow the law of their nature; man alone has an impulse leading him to set up some other law to control the bent of his nature.

This holds good, of course, as to moral matters, as well as intellectual matters: and it is of moral matters that we are generally thinking when we affirm it. But it holds good as to intellectual matters too. Now, probably, M. Sainte-Beuve had not these words of Cicero in his mind when he made, about the French nation, the assertion I am going to quote; but, for all that, the assertion leans for support, one may say, upon the truth conveyed in those words of Cicero, and wonderfully illustrates and confirms them. "In France," says M. Sainte-Beuve, "the first consideration for us is not whether we are amused and pleased by a work of art or mind, nor is it whether we are touched by it. What we seek above all to learn is, whether *we were right* in being amused with it, and in applauding it, and in being moved by it." Those are very remarkable words, and they are, I believe, in the main quite true. A Frenchman has, to a considerable degree, what one may call a conscience in intellectual matters; he has an active belief that there is a right and a wrong in them, that he is bound to honour and obey the right, that he is disgraced by cleaving to the wrong. All the world has, or professes to have, this conscience in moral matters. The word *conscience* has become almost confined, in popular use, to the moral sphere, because this lively susceptibility of feeling is, in the moral sphere, so far more common than in the intellectual sphere; the livelier, in the moral sphere, this susceptibility is, the greater becomes a man's readiness to admit a high standard of action, an ideal authoritatively correcting his everyday moral habits; here, such willing admission of authority is due to sensitiveness of conscience. And a like deference to a standard higher than one's own habitual standard in intellectual matters, a like respectful recognition of a superior ideal, is caused, in the intellectual sphere, by sensitiveness of intelligence. Those whose intelligence is quickest, openest, most sensitive, are readiest with this deference; those whose intelligence is less delicate and sensitive are less disposed to it. Well, now we are on the road to see why the French have their Academy and we have nothing of the kind.

What are the essential characteristics of the spirit of our nation? Not, certainly, an open and clear mind, not a quick and flexible intelligence. Our greatest admirers would not claim for us that we have these in a pre-eminent degree; they might say that we had more of them than our detractors gave us credit for; but they would not assert them to be our essential characteristics. They would rather allege, as our chief spiritual characteristics, energy and honesty; and, if we are judged favourably and positively, not invidiously and negatively, our chief characteristics are no doubt, these:—energy and honesty, not an open and clear mind, not a quick and flexible intelligence. Openness of mind and flexibility of intelligence were very signal characteristics of the Athenian people in ancient times; everybody will feel that. Openness of mind and flexibility of intelligence are remarkable characteristics of the French people in modern times; at any rate, they strikingly characterise them as compared with us; I think everybody, or almost everybody, will feel that. I will not now ask what more the Athenian or the French spirit has than this, nor what shortcomings either of them may have as a set-off against this; all I want now to point out is that they have this, and that we have it in a much lesser degree. Let me remark, however, that not only in the moral sphere, but also in the intellectual and spiritual sphere, energy and honesty are most important and fruitful qualities; that, for instance, of what we call genius energy is the most essential part. So, by assigning to a nation energy and honesty as its chief spiritual characteristics,—by refusing to it, as at all eminent characteristics, openness of mind and flexibility of intelligence,—we do not by any means, as some people might at first suppose, relegate its importance and its power of manifesting itself with effect from the intellectual to the moral sphere. We only indicate its probable special line of successful activity in the intellectual sphere, and, it is true, certain imperfections and failings to which, in this sphere, it will always be subject. Genius is mainly an affair of energy, and poetry is mainly an affair of genius; therefore a nation whose spirit is characterised by energy may well be eminent in poetry;—and we have Shakspeare. Again, the highest reach of science is, one may say, an inventive power, a faculty of divination, akin to the highest power exercised in poetry; therefore, a nation whose spirit is characterised by energy may well be eminent in science;—and we have

Newton. Shakspeare and Newton: in the intellectual sphere there can be no higher names. And what that energy, which is the life of genius, above everything demands and insists upon, is freedom; entire independence of all authority, prescription, and routine,—the fullest room to expand as it will. Therefore, a nation whose chief spiritual characteristic is energy, will not be very apt to set up, in intellectual matters, a fixed standard, an authority, like an academy. By this it certainly escapes certain real inconveniences and dangers, and it can, at the same time, as we have seen, reach undeniably splendid heights in poetry and science. On the other hand, some of these requisites of intellectual work are specially the affair of quickness of mind and flexibility of intelligence. The form, the method of evolution, the precision, the proportions, the relations of the parts to the whole, in an intellectual work, depend mainly upon them. And these are the elements of an intellectual work which are really most communicable from it, which can most be learned and adopted from it, which have, therefore, the greatest effect upon the intellectual performance of others. Even in poetry, these requisites are very important; and the poetry of a nation, not eminent for the gifts on which they depend, will, more or less, suffer by this shortcoming. In poetry, however, they are, after all, secondary, and energy is the first thing; but in prose they are of first-rate importance. In its prose literature, therefore, and in the routine of intellectual work generally, a nation with no particular gifts for these will not be so successful. These are what, as I have said, can to a certain degree be learned and appropriated, while the free activity of genius cannot. Academies consecrate and maintain them, and, therefore, a nation with an eminent turn for them naturally establishes academies. So far as routine and authority tend to embarrass energy and inventive genius, academies may be said to be obstructive to energy and inventive genius, and, to this extent, to the human spirit's general advance. But then this evil is so much compensated by the propagation, on a large scale, of the mental aptitudes and demands which an open mind and a flexible intelligence naturally engender, genius itself, in the long run, so greatly finds its account in this propagation, and bodies like the French Academy have such power for promoting it, that the general advance of the human spirit is perhaps, on the whole, rather furthered than impeded by their existence.

How much greater is our nation in poetry than prose! how much better, in general, do the productions of its spirit show in the qualities of genius than in the qualities of intelligence! One may constantly remark this in the work of individuals; how much more striking, in general, does any Englishman,—of some vigour of mind, but by no means a poet,—seem in his verse than in his prose! No doubt his verse suffers from the same defects which impair his prose, and he cannot express himself with real success in it; but how much more powerful a personage does he appear in it, by dint of feeling, and of originality and movement of ideas, than when he is writing prose! With a Frenchman of like stamp, it is just the reverse: set him to write poetry, he is limited, artificial, and impotent; set him to write prose, he is free, natural, and effective. The power of French literature is in its prose-writers, the power of English literature is in its poets. Nay, many of the celebrated French poets depend wholly for their fame upon the qualities of intelligence which they exhibit,—qualities which are the distinctive support of prose; many of the celebrated English prose-writers depend wholly for their fame upon the qualities of genius and imagination which they exhibit,—qualities which are the distinctive support of poetry. But, as I have said, the qualities of genius are less transferable than the qualities of intelligence; less can be immediately learned and appropriated from their product; they are less direct and stringent intellectual agencies, though they may be more beautiful and divine. Shakspeare and our great Elizabethan group were certainly more gifted writers than Corneille and his group; but what was the sequel to this great literature, this literature of genius, as we may call it, stretching from Marlowe to Milton? What did it lead up to in English literature? To our provincial and second-rate literature of the eighteenth century. What, on the other hand, was the sequel to the literature of the French "great century," to this literature of intelligence, as, by comparison with our Elizabethan literature, we may call it; what did it lead up to? To the French literature of the eighteenth century, one of the most powerful and pervasive intellectual agencies that have ever existed,—the greatest European force of the eighteenth century. In science, again, we had Newton, a genius of the very highest order, a type of genius in science, if ever there was one. On the continent, as a sort of counterpart to Newton, there was Leibnitz; a man, it seems to me (though on these matters I speak under correction), of much less creative energy of genius, much less power of divination than Newton, but rather a man of admirable intelligence, a type of intelligence in science, if ever there was one. Well, and what did they each directly lead up to in science? What was the intellectual generation that sprang from each of them? I only repeat what the men of science have themselves pointed out. The man of genius was continued by the English analysts of the eighteenth century, comparatively powerless and obscure followers of the renowned master; the man of intelligence was continued by successors like Bernouilli, Euler, Lagrange, and Laplace, the greatest names in modern mathematics.

What I want the reader to see is, that the question as to the utility of academies to the intellectual life of a nation is not settled when we say, for instance: "Oh, we have never had an academy, and yet we have, confessedly, a very great literature." It still remains to be asked: "What sort of a great literature? a literature great in the special qualities of genius, or great in the special qualities of intelligence?" If in the former, it is by no means sure that either our literature, or the general intellectual life of our nation, has got already, without academies, all that academies can give. Both the one and the other may very well be somewhat wanting in those qualities of intelligence, out of a lively sense for which a body like the French Academy, as I have said, springs, and which such a body does a great deal to spread and confirm. Our literature, in spite of the genius manifested in it, may fall short in form, method, precision, proportions, arrangement, —all of them, I have said, things where intelligence proper comes in. It may be comparatively weak in prose, that branch of literature where intelligence proper is, so to speak, all in all. In this branch it may show many grave faults to which the want of a quick flexible intelligence, and of the strict standard which such an intelligence tends to impose, makes it liable; it may be full of haphazard, crudeness, provincialism, eccentricity, violence, blundering. It may be a less stringent and effective intellectual agency, both upon our own nation and upon the world at large, than other literatures which show less genius, perhaps, but more intelligence.

The right conclusion certainly is that we should try, so far as we can, to make up our shortcomings; and that to this end, instead of always fixing our thoughts upon the points in which our literature, and our intellectual life generally, are strong, we should, from time to time, fix them upon those in which they are weak, and so learn to perceive clearly what we have to amend. What is our second great spiritual characteristic,—our honesty,—good for, if it is not good for this? But it will,—I am sure it will,—more and more, as time goes on, be found good for this.

Well, then, an institution like the French Academy,—an institution owing its existence to a national bent towards the things of the mind, towards culture, towards clearness, correctness and propriety in thinking and speaking, and, in its turn, promoting this bent,—sets standards in a number of directions, and creates, in all these directions, a force of educated opinion, checking and rebuking those who fall below these standards, or who set them at nought. Educated opinion exists here as in France; but in France the Academy serves as a sort of centre and rallying-point to it, and gives it a force which it has not got here. Why is all the *journeyman-work* of literature, as I may call it, so much worse done here than it is in France? I do not wish to hurt anyone's feelings; but surely this is so. Think of the difference between our books of reference and those of the French, between our biographical dictionaries (to take a striking instance) and theirs; think of the difference between the translations of the classics turned out for Mr Bohn's library and those turned out for M. Nisard's collection! As a general rule, hardly any one amongst us, who knows French and German well, would use an English book of reference when he could get a French or German one; or would look at an English prose translation of an ancient author when he could get a French or German one. It is not that there do not exist in England, as in France, a number of people perfectly well able to discern what is good, in these things, from what is bad, and preferring what is good; but they are isolated, they form no powerful body of opinion, they are not strong enough to set a standard, up to which even the journeyman-work of literature must be brought, if it is to be vendible. Ignorance and charlatanism in work of this kind are always trying to pass off their wares as excellent, and to cry down criticism as the voice of an insignificant, over fastidious minority; they easily persuade the multitude that this is so when the minority is scattered about as it is here, not so easily when it is banded together as in the French Academy. So, again, with freaks in dealing with language; certainly all such freaks tend to impair the power and beauty of language; and how far more common they are with us than with the French! To take a very familiar instance. Every one has noticed the way in which the *Times* chooses to spell the word "diocese;" it always spells it "dioce*ss*" deriving it, I suppose, from *Zeus* and *census*. The *Journal des Débats* might just as well write "diocess" instead of "diocése," but imagine the *Journal des Débats* doing so! Imagine an educated Frenchman indulging himself in an orthographical antic of this sort, in face of the grave respect with which the Academy and its dictionary invest the French language! Some people will say these are little things; they are not; they are of bad example. They tend to spread the baneful notion that there is no such thing as a high correct standard in intellectual matters; that every one may as well take his own way; they are at variance with the severe discipline necessary for all real culture; they confirm us in habits of wilfulness and eccentricity, which hurt our minds, and damage our credit with serious people. The late Mr Donaldson was certainly a man of great ability, and I, who am not an Orientalist, do not pretend to judge his *Jashar:* but let the reader observe the form which a foreign Orientalist's judgment of it naturally takes. M. Renan calls it a *tentative malheureuse*, a failure, in short; this it may be, or it may not be; I am no judge. But he goes on: "It is astonishing that a recent article" (in a French periodical, he means) "should have brought forward as the last word of German exegesis a work like this, composed by a doctor of the University of Cambridge, and universally condemned by German critics."

You see what he means to imply: an extravagance of this sort could never have come from Germany, where there is a great force of critical opinion controlling a learned man's vagaries, and keeping him straight; it comes from the native home of intellectual eccentricity of all kinds,—from England—from a doctor of the University of Cambridge;—and I daresay he would not expect much better things from a doctor of the University of Oxford. Again, after speaking of what Germany and France have done for the history of Mahomet: "America and England," M. Renan goes on, "have also occupied themselves with Mahomet." He mentions Washington's Irving's *Life of Mahomet*, which does not, he says, evince much of an historical sense, a *sentiment historique fort élevé*; "but," he proceeds, "this book shows a real progress, when one thinks that in 1829 Mr Charles Forster published two thick volumes, which enchanted the English *révérends*, to make out that Mahomet was the little horn of the he-goat that figures in the eighth chapter of Daniel, and that the Pope was the great horn. Mr Forster founded on this ingenious parallel a whole philosophy of history, according to which the Pope represented the Western corruption of Christianity, and Mahomet the Eastern; thence the striking resemblances between Mahometanism and Popery." And in a note M. Renan adds: "This is the same Mr Charles Forster who is the author of a mystification about the Sinaitic inscriptions, in which he declares he finds the primitive language." As much as to say: "It is an Englishman, be surprised at no extravagance." If these innuendoes had no ground, and were made in hatred and malice, they would not be worth a moment's attention; but they come from a grave Orientalist, on his own subject, and they point to a real fact;—the absence, in this country, of any force of educated literary and scientific opinion, making aberrations like those of the author of *The One Primeval Language* out of the question. Not only the author of such aberrations, often a very clever man, suffers by the want of check, by the not being kept straight, and spends force in vain on a false road, which, under better discipline, he might have used with profit on a true one; but all his adherents, both "reverends" and others, suffer too, and the general rate of information and judgment is in this way kept low.

In a production which we have all been reading lately, a production stamped throughout with a literary quality very rare in this country, and of which I shall have a word to say presently—*urbanity*; in this production, the work of a man never to be named by any son of Oxford without sympathy, a man who alone in Oxford of his generation, alone of many generations, conveyed to us in his genius that same charm, that same ineffable sentiment which this exquisite place itself conveys,—I mean Dr Newman,—an expression is frequently used which is more common in theological than in literary language, but which seems to me fitted to be of general service; the *note* of so and so, the note of catholicity, the note of antiquity, the note of sanctity, and so on. Adopting this expressive word, I say that in the bulk of the intellectual work of a nation which has no centre, no intellectual metropolis like an academy, like M. Sainte-Beuve's "sovereign organ of opinion," like M. Renan's "recognised authority in matters of tone and taste,"—there is observable a *note of provinciality*. Now to get rid of provinciality is a certain stage of culture; a stage the positive result of which we must not make of too much importance, but which is, nevertheless, indispensable; for it brings us on to the platform where alone the best and highest intellectual work can be said fairly to begin. Work done after men have reached this platform is *classical*; and that is the only work which, in the long run, can stand. All the *scoriæ* in the work of men of great genius who have not lived on this platform are due to their not having lived on it. Genius raises them to it by moments, and the portions of their work which are immortal are done at these moments; but more of it would have been immortal if they had not reached this platform at moments only, if they had had the culture which makes men live there.

The less a literature has felt the influence of a supposed centre of correct information, correct judgment, correct taste, the more we shall find in it this note of provinciality. I have shown the note of provinciality as caused by remoteness from a centre of correct information. Of course the note of provinciality from the want of a centre of correct taste is still more visible, and it is also still more common. For here great—even the greatest—powers of mind most fail a man. Great powers of mind will make him inform himself thoroughly, great powers of mind will make him think profoundly, even with ignorance and platitude all round him; but not even great powers of mind will keep his taste and style perfectly sound and sure, if he is left too much to himself, with no "sovereign organ of opinion" in these matters near him. Even men like Jeremy Taylor and Burke suffer here. Take this passage from Taylor's funeral sermon on Lady Carbery:—

"So have I seen a river, deep and smooth, passing with a still foot and a sober face, and paying to the *fiscus*, the great exchequer of the sea, a tribute large and full; and hard by it a little brook, skipping and making a noise upon its unequal and neighbour bottom; and after all its talking and bragged motion, it paid to its common audit no more than the revenues of a little cloud or a contemptible vessel: so have I sometimes compared the issues of her religion to the solemnities and famed outsides of another's piety."

That passage has been much admired, and, indeed, the genius in it is undeniable. I should say, for my part, that genius, the ruling divinity of poetry, had been too busy in it, and intelligence, the ruling divinity of prose, not busy enough. But can any one, with the best models of style in his head, help feeling the note of provinciality there, the want of simplicity, the want of measure, the want of just the qualities that make prose classical? If he does not feel what I mean, let him place beside the passage of Taylor this passage from the Panegyric of St Paul, by Taylor's contemporary, Bossuet:—

"Il ira, cet ignorant dans l'art de bien dire, avec cette locution rude, avec cette phrase qui sent l'étranger il ira en cette Grèce polie, la mère des philosophes et des orateurs; et malgré la résistance du monde, il y établira plus d'Eglises que Platon n'y a gagné de disciples par cette éloquence qu'on a crue divine."

There we have prose without the note of provinciality—classical prose, prose of the centre.

Or take Burke, our greatest English prose-writer, as I think; take expressions like this:—

"Blindfold themselves, like bulls that shut their eyes when they push, they drive, by the point of their bayonets, their slaves, blindfolded, indeed, no worse than their lords, to take their fictions for currencies, and to swallow down paper pills by thirty-four millions sterling at a dose."

Or this:—

"They used it" (the royal name) "as a sort of navel-string, to nourish their unnatural offspring from the bowels of royalty itself. Now that the monster can purvey for its own subsistence, it will only carry the mark about it, as a token of its having torn the womb it came from."

Or this:—

"Without one natural pang, he" (Rousseau) "casts away, as a sort of offal and excrement, the spawn of his disgustful amours, and sends his children to the hospital of foundlings."

Or this:—

"I confess I never liked this continual talk of resistance and revolution, or the practice of making the extreme medicine of the constitution its daily bread. It renders the habit of society dangerously valetudinary; it is taking periodical doses of mercury sublimate, and swallowing down repeated provocatives of cantharides to our love of liberty."

I say that is extravagant prose; prose too much suffered to indulge its caprices; prose at too great a distance from the centre of good taste; prose, in short, with the note of provinciality. People may reply, it is rich and imaginative; yes, that is just it, it is *Asiatic* prose, as the ancient critics would have said; prose somewhat barbarously rich and over-loaded. But the true prose is Attic prose.

Well, but Addison's prose is Attic prose. Where, then, it may be asked, is the note of provinciality in Addison? I answer, in the commonplace of his ideas. This is a matter worth remarking. Addison claims to take leading rank as a moralist. To do that, you must have ideas of the first order on your subject—the best ideas, at any rate, attainable in your time—as well as be able to express them in a perfectly sound and sure style. Else you show your distance from the centre of ideas by your matter; you are provincial by your matter, though you may not be provincial by your style. It is comparatively a small matter to express oneself well, if one will be content with not expressing much, with expressing only trite ideas; the problem is to express new and profound ideas in a perfectly sound and classical style. He is the true classic, in every age, who does that. Now Addison has not, on his subject of morals, the force of ideas of the moralists of the first class—the classical moralists; he has not the best ideas attainable in or about his time, and which were, so to speak, in the air then, to be seized by the finest spirits; he is not to be compared for power, searchingness, or delicacy of thought to Pascal or La Bruyère or Vauvenargues; he is rather on a level, in this respect, with a man like Marmontel; therefore, I say, he has the note of provinciality as a moralist; he is provincial by his matter, though not by his style.

To illustrate what I mean by an example. Addison, writing as a moralist on fixedness in religious faith, says:—

"Those who delight in reading books of controversy do very seldom arrive at a fixed and settled habit of faith. The doubt which was laid revives again, and shows itself in new difficulties; and that generally for this reason,—because the mind, which is perpetually tossed in controversies and disputes, is apt to forget the reasons which had once set it at rest, and to be disquieted with any former perplexity when it appears in a new shape, or is started by a different hand."

It may be said, that is classical English, perfect in lucidity, measure, and propriety. I make no objection; but, in my turn, I say that the idea expressed is perfectly trite and barren, and that it is a note of provinciality in Addison, in a man whom a nation puts forward as one of its great moralists, to have no profounder and more striking idea to produce on this great subject. Compare, on the same subject, these words of a moralist really of the first order, really at the centre by his ideas,—Joubert:—

"L'expérience de beaucoup d'opinions donne à l'esprit beaucoup de flexibilité et l'affermit dans celles qu'il croit les meilleures."

With what a flash of light that touches the subject! how it sets us thinking! what a genuine contribution to moral science it is!

In short, where there is no centre like an academy, if you have genius and powerful ideas, you are apt not to have the best style going; if you have precision of style and not genius, you are apt not to have the best ideas going.

The provincial spirit, again, exaggerates the value of its ideas for want of a high standard at hand by which to try them. Or rather, for want of such a standard, it gives one idea too much prominence at the expense of others; it orders its ideas amiss; it is hurried away by fancies; it likes and dislikes too passionately, too exclusively. Its admiration weeps hysterical tears, and its disapprobation foams at the mouth. So we get the *eruptive* and the *aggressive* manner in literature; the former prevails most in our criticism, the latter in our newspapers. For, not having the lucidity of a large and centrally placed intelligence, the provincial spirit has not its graciousness; it does not persuade, it makes war; it has not urbanity, the tone of the city, of the centre, the tone which always aims at a spiritual and intellectual effect, and not excluding the use of banter, never disjoins banter itself from politeness, from felicity. But the provincial tone is more violent, and seems to aim rather at an effect upon the blood and senses than upon the spirit and intellect; it loves hard-hitting rather than persuading. The newspaper, with its party spirit, its thorough-goingness, its resolute avoidance of shades and distinctions, its short, highly-charged, heavy-shotted articles, its style so unlike that style *lenis minimèque pertinax*—easy and not too violently insisting,—which the ancients so much admired, is its true literature; the provincial spirit likes in the newspaper just what makes the newspaper such bad food for it,—just what made Goethe say, when he was pressed hard about the immorality of Byron's poems, that, after all, they were not so immoral as the newspapers. The French talk of the *brutalité des journaux anglais*. What strikes them comes from the necessary inherent tendencies of newspaper-writing not being checked in England by any centre of intelligent and urbane spirit, but rather stimulated by coming in contact with a provincial spirit. Even a newspaper like the *Saturday Review*, that old friend of all of us, a newspaper expressly aiming at an immunity from the common newspaper-spirit, aiming at being a sort of organ of reason,—and, by thus aiming, it merits great gratitude and has done great good,—even the *Saturday Review*, replying to some foreign criticism on our precautions against invasion, falls into a strain of this kind:—

"To do this" (to take these precautions) "seems to us eminently worthy of a great nation, and to talk of it as unworthy of a great nation, seems to us eminently worthy of a great fool."

There is what the French mean when they talk of the *brutalité des journaux anglais;* there is a style certainly as far removed from urbanity as possible,—a style with what I call the note of provinciality. And the same note may not unfrequently be observed even in the ideas of this newspaper, full as it is of thought and cleverness: certain ideas allowed to become fixed ideas, to prevail too absolutely. I will not speak of the immediate present, but, to go a little while back, it had the critic who so disliked the Emperor of the French; it had the critic who so disliked the subject of my present remarks—academies; it had the critic who was so fond of the German element in our nation, and, indeed, everywhere; who ground his teeth if one said *Charlemagne* instead of *Charles the Great*, and, in short, saw all things in Teutonism, as Malebranche saw all things in God. Certainly any one may fairly find faults in the Emperor Napoleon or in academies, and merit in the German element; but it is a note of the provincial spirit not to hold ideas of this kind a little more easily, to be so devoured by them, to suffer them to become crotchets.

In England there needs a miracle of genius like Shakspeare's to produce balance of mind, and a miracle of intellectual delicacy like Dr Newman's to produce urbanity of style. How prevalent all round us is the want of balance of mind and urbanity of style! How much, doubtless, it is to be found in ourselves,—in each of us! but, as human nature is constituted, every one can see it clearest in his contemporaries. There, above all, we should consider it, because they and we are exposed to the same influences; and it is in the best of one's contemporaries that it is most worth considering, because one then most feels the harm it does, when one sees what they would be without it. Think of the difference between Mr Ruskin exercising his genius, and Mr Ruskin exercising his intelligence; consider the truth and beauty of this:—

"Go out, in the spring-time, among the meadows that slope from the shores of the Swiss lakes to the roots of their lower mountains. There, mingled with the taller gentians and the white narcissus, the grass grows deep and free; and as you follow the winding mountain paths, beneath arching boughs all veiled and dim with blossom,—paths that for ever droop and rise over the green banks and mounds sweeping down in scented undulation, steep to the blue water, studded here and there with new-mown heaps, filling all the air with fainter sweetness,—look up towards the higher hills, where the waves of everlasting green roll silently into their long inlets among the shadows of the pines. . . . . ."

There is what the genius, the feeling, the temperament in Mr Ruskin, the original and incommunicable part, has to do with; and how exquisite it is! All the critic could possibly suggest, in the way of objection, would be, perhaps, that Mr Ruskin is there trying to make prose do more than it can perfectly do; that what he is there attempting he will never, except in poetry, be able to accomplish to his own entire satisfaction: but he accomplishes so much that the critic may well hesitate to suggest even this. Place beside this charming passage another,—a passage about Shakspeare's names, where the intelligence and judgment of Mr Ruskin, the acquired, trained, communicable part in him, are brought into play,—and see the difference:—

"Of Shakspeare's names I will afterwards speak at more length; they are curiously—often barbarously—mixed out of various traditions and languages. Three of the clearest in meaning have been already noticed. Desdemona—'δυσδαιμονία,' *miserable fortune*—is also plain enough. Othello is, I believe, 'the careful;' all the calamity of the tragedy arising from the single flaw and error in his magnificently collected strength. Ophelia, 'serviceableness,' the true, lost wife of Hamlet, is marked as having a Greek name by that of her brother, Laertes; and its signification is once exquisitely alluded to in that brother's last word of her, where her gentle preciousness is opposed to the uselessness of the churlish clergy:—'A *ministering* angel shall my sister be, when thou liest howling.' Hamlet is, I believe, connected in some way with 'homely,' the entire event of the tragedy turning on betrayal of home duty. Hermione (ἕρμα), 'pillar-like' (ἣ εἶδος ἔχε χρυσῆς Ἀφροδίτης); Titania (τιτήνη), 'the queen;' Benedick and Beatrice, 'blessed and blessing;' Valentine and Proteus, 'enduring or strong' (*valens*), and 'changeful.' Iago and Iachimo have evidently the same root—probably the Spanish Iago, Jacob, 'the supplanter.'"

Now, really, what a piece of extravagance all that is! I will not say that the meaning of Shakspeare's names (I put aside the question as to the correctness of Mr Ruskin's etymologies) has no effect at all, may be entirely lost sight of; but to give it that degree of prominence is to throw the reins to one's whim, to forget all moderation and proportion, to lose the balance of one's mind altogether. It is to show in one's criticism, to the highest excess, the note of provinciality.

Again, there is Mr Palgrave, certainly endowed with a very fine critical tact: his *Golden Treasury* abundantly proves it. The plan of arrangement which he devised for that work, the mode in which he followed his plan out, nay, one might even say, merely the juxtaposition, in pursuance of it, of two such pieces as those of Wordsworth and Shelley which form the 285th and 286th in his collection, show a delicacy of feeling in these matters which is quite indisputable and very rare. And his notes are full of remarks which show it too. All the more striking, conjoined with so much justness of preception, are certain freaks and violences in Mr Palgrave's criticism, mainly imputable, I think, to the critic's isolated position in this country, to his feeling himself too much left to take his own way, too much without any central authority representing high culture and sound judgment, by which he may be, on the one hand, confirmed as against the ignorant, on the other, held in respect when he himself is inclined to take liberties. I mean such things as this note on Milton's line,—

"The great Emathian conqueror bade spare" . . .

"When Thebes was destroyed, Alexander ordered the house of Pindar to be spared. *He was as incapable of appreciating the poet as Louis XIV. of appreciating Racine; but even the narrow and barbarian mind of Alexander could understand the advantage of a showy act of homage to poetry.*" A note like that I call a freak or a violence; if this disparaging view of Alexander and Louis XIV., so unlike the current view, is wrong,—if the current view is, after all, the truer one of them,—the note is a freak. But, even if its disparaging view is right, the note is a violence; for abandoning the true mode of intellectual action—persuasion, the instilment of conviction,—it simply astounds and irritates the hearer by contradicting without a word of proof or preparation, his fixed and familiar notions; and this is mere violence. In either case, the fitness, the measure, the centrality, which is the soul of all good criticism, is lost, and the note of provinciality shows itself.

Thus, in the famous *Handbook*, marks of a fine power of perception are everywhere discernible, but so, too, are marks of the want of sure balance, of the check and support afforded by knowing one speaks before good and severe judges. When Mr Palgrave dislikes a thing, he feels no pressure constraining him either to try his dislike closely or to express it moderately; he does not mince matters, he gives his dislike all its own way; both his judgment and his style would gain if he were under more restraint. "The style which has filled London with the dead monotony of Gower or Harley Streets, or the pale commonplace of Belgravia, Tyburnia, and Kensington; which has pierced Paris and Madrid with the feeble frivolities of the Rue Rivoli and the Strada de Toledo." He dislikes the architecture of the Rue Rivoli, and he puts it on a level with the architecture of Belgravia and Gower Street; he lumps them all together in one condemnation, he loses sight of the shade, the distinction, which is everything here; the distinction, namely, that the architecture of the Rue Rivoli expresses show, splendour, pleasure,—unworthy things, perhaps, to express alone and for their own sakes, but it expresses them; whereas the architecture of Gower Street and Belgravia merely expresses the impotence of the architect to express anything. Then, as to style: "sculpture which stands in a contrast with Woolner hardly more shameful than diverting." . . . "passing from Davy or Faraday to the art of the mountebank or the science of the spirit-rapper." . . . "it is the old, old story with Marochetti, the frog trying to blow himself out to bull dimensions. He may puff and be puffed, but he will never do it." We all remember that shower of amenities on poor M. Marochetti. Now, here Mr Palgrave himself enables us to form a contrast which lets us see just what the presence of an academy does for style; for he quotes a criticism by M. Gustave Planche on this very M. Marochetti. M. Gustave Planche was a critic of the very first order, a man of strong opinions, which he expressed with severity; he, too, condemns M. Marochetti's work, and Mr Palgrave calls him as a witness to back what he has himself said;

certainly Mr Palgrave's translation will not exaggerate M. Planche's urbanity in dealing with M. Marochetti, but, even in this translation, see the difference in sobriety, in measure, between the critic writing in Paris and the critic writing in London:—

"These conditions are so elementary, that I am at a perfect loss to comprehend how M. Marochetti has neglected them. There are soldiers here like the leaden playthings of the nursery: it is almost impossible to guess whether there is a body beneath the dress. We have here no question of style, not even of grammar; it is nothing beyond mere matter of the alphabet of art. To break these conditions is the same as to be ignorant of spelling."

That is really more formidable criticism than Mr Palgrave's, and yet in how perfectly temperate a style! M. Planche's advantage is, that he feels himself to be speaking before competent judges, that there is a force of cultivated opinion for him to appeal to. Therefore, he must not be extravagant, and he need not storm; he must satisfy the reason and taste,—that is his business. Mr Palgrave, on the other hand, feels himself to be speaking before a promiscuous multitude, with the few good judges so scattered through it as to be powerless; therefore, he has no calm confidence and no self-control; he relies on the strength of his lungs; he knows that big words impose on the mob, and that, even if he is outrageous, most of his audience are apt to be a great deal more so.

Again, the most successful English book of last season was certainly Mr Kinglake's *Invasion of the Crimea*. Its style was one of the most renowned things about it, and yet how conspicuous a fault in Mr Kinglake's style in this overcharge of which I have been speaking! Mr James Gordon Bennett, of the *New York Herald*, says, I believe, that the highest achievement of the human intellect is what he calls "a good editorial." This is not quite so; but, if it were so, on what a height would these two volumes by Mr Kinglake stand! I have already spoken of the Attic and the Asiatic styles; besides these, there is the Corinthian style. That is the style for "a good editorial," and Mr Kinglake has really reached perfection in it. It has not the warm glow, blithe movement, and soft pliancy of life, as the Attic style has;

it has not the over-heavy richness and encumbered gait of the Asiatic style; it has glitter without warmth, rapidity without ease, effectiveness without charm. Its characteristic is, that it has no *soul;* all it exists for, is to get its ends, to make its points, to damage its adversaries, to be admired, to triumph. "His features put on that glow which, seen in men of his race—race known by the kindling gray eye, and the light stubborn, crisping hair—discloses the rapture of instant fight." How glittering that is, but how perfectly frosty! "There was a salient point of difference between the boulevards and the hill sides of the Alma. The Russians were armed." How trenchant that is, but how perfectly unscrupulous! This is the Corinthian style; the glitter of the East with the hardness of the West; "the passion for tinsel,"—some one, himself a Corinthian, said of Mr Kinglake's style,—"of a sensuous Jew, with the savage spleen of a dyspeptic Englishman." I do not say this of Mr Kinglake's style—I am very far from saying it. To say it is to fall into just that cold, brassy, over-stretched style which Mr Kinglake himself employs so far too much, and which I, for my part, reprobate. But when a brother Corinthian of Mr Kinglake's says it, I feel what he means.

A style so bent on effect at the expense of soul, simplicity, and delicacy; a style so little studious of the charm of the great models; so far from classic truth and grace, must surely be said to have the note of provinciality. Yet Mr Kinglake's talent is a really eminent one, and so in harmony with our intellectual habits and tendencies, that, to the great bulk of English people, the faults of his style seem its merits; all the more needful that criticism should not be dazzled by them, but should try closely this, the form of his work. The matter of the work is a separate thing; and, indeed, this has been, I believe, withdrawn from discussion. Mr Kinglake declaring that this must and shall stay as it is, and that he is resolved, like Pontius Pilate, to stand by what he has written. And here, I must say, he seems to me to be quite right. On the breast of that huge Mississippi of falsehood called *history*, a foam-bell more or less is of no consequence. But he may, at any rate, ease and soften his style.

We must not compare a man of Mr Kinglake's literary talent with writers like M. de Bazancourt. We must compare him with M. Thiers. And what a superiority in style has M. Thiers from being formed in a good school, with severe traditions, wholesome restraining influences! Even in this age of Mr James Gordon Bennett, his style has nothing Corinthian about it, its lightness and brightness make it almost Attic. It is not quite Attic, however; it has not the infallible sureness of Attic taste. Sometimes his head gets a little hot with the fumes of patriotism, and then he crosses the line, he loses perfect measure, he declaims, he raises a momentary smile. France condemned "à être l'effroi du monde *dont elle pourrait être l'amour*,"—Cæsar, whose exquisite simplicity M. Thiers so much admires, would not have written like that. There is, if I may be allowed to say so, the slightest possible touch of fatuity in such language,—of that failure in good sense which comes from too warm a self satisfaction. But compare this language with Mr Kinglake's Marshal St Arnaud—"dismissed from the presence" of Lord Raglan or Lord Stratford, "cowed and pressed down" under their "stern reproofs," or under "the majesty of the great Elchi's Canning brow and tight, merciless lips!" The failure in good sense and good taste there reaches far beyond what the French mean by *fatuity*; they would call it by another word, a word expressing blank defect of intelligence, a word for which we have no exact equivalent in English,—*bête*. It is the difference between a venial, momentary, good-tempered excess, in a man of the world, of an amiable and social weakness,—vanity; and a serious, settled, fierce, narrow, provincial misconception of the whole relative value of one's own things and the things of others. So baneful to the style of even the cleverest man may be the total want of checks

In all I have said, I do not pretend that the examples given prove my rule as to the influence of academies; they only illustrate it. Examples in plenty might very likely be found to set against them; the truth of the rule depends, no doubt, on whether the balance of all the examples is in its favour or not; but actually to strike this balance is always out of the question. Here, as everywhere else, the rule, the idea, if true, commends itself to the judicious, and then the examples make it clearer still to them. This is the real use of examples, and this alone is the purpose which I have meant mine to serve. There is also another side to the whole question,—as to the limiting and prejudicial operation which academies may have; but this side of the question it rather behoves the French, not us, to study.

The reader will ask for some practical conclusion about the establishment of an Academy in this country, and perhaps I shall hardly give him the one he expects. But nations have their own modes of acting, and these modes are not easily changed; they are even consecrated, when great things have been done in them. When a literature has produced Shakspeare and Milton, when it has even produced Barrow and Burke, it cannot well abandon its traditions; it can hardly begin, at this late time of day, with an institution like the French Academy. I think academies with a limited, special, scientific scope, in the various lines of intellectual work,—academies like that of Berlin, for instance,—we with time may, and probably shall, establish. And no doubt they will do good; no doubt the presence of such influential centres of correct information will tend to raise the standard amongst us for what I have called the *journeyman-work* of literature, and to free us from the scandal of such biographical dictionaries as Chalmers's, or such translations as a recent one of Spinoza, or perhaps, such philological freaks as Mr Forster's about the one primeval language. But an academy quite like the French Academy, a sovereign organ of the highest literary opinion, a recognised authority in matters of intellectual tone and taste, we shall hardly have, and perhaps we ought not to wish to have it. But then every one amongst us with any turn for literature will do well to remember to what shortcomings and excesses, which such an academy tends to correct, we are liable; and the more liable, of course, for not having it. He will do well constantly to try himself in respect of these, steadily to widen his culture, severely to check in himself the provincial spirit; and he will do this the better the more he keeps in mind that all mere glorification by ourselves of ourselves, or our literature, in the strain of what, at the beginning of these remarks, I quoted from Lord Macaulay, is both vulgar, and, besides being vulgar, retarding.

III

MAURICE DE GUÉRIN

I WILL not presume to say that I now know the French language well; but at a time when I knew it even less well than at present,—some fifteen years ago,—I remember pestering those about me with this sentence, the rhythm of which had lodged itself in my head, and which, with the strangest pronunciation possible, I kept perpetually declaiming: "*Les dieux jaloux ont enfoui quelque part les témoignages de la descendance des choses; mais au bord de quel Océan ont-ils roulé la pierre qui les couvre, ô Macarée!*"

These words come from a short composition called the *Centaur*, of which the author, Georges-Maurice de Guérin, died in the year 1839, at the age of twenty-eight without having published anything. In 1840, Madame Sand brought out the *Centaur* in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, with a short notice of its author, and a few extracts from his letters. A year or two afterwards she reprinted these at the end of a volume of her novels; and there it was that I fell in with them. I was so much struck with the *Centaur* that I waited anxiously to hear something more of its author, and of what he had left; but it was not till the other day—twenty years after the first publication of the *Centaur* in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, that my anxiety was satisfied. At the end of 1860 appeared two volumes with the title *Maurice de Guérin, Reliquiæ*, containing the *Centaur*, several poems of Guérin, his journals, and a number of his letters, collected and edited by a devoted friend, M. Trebutien, and preceded by a notice of Guérin by the first of living critics, M. Sainte-Beuve.

The grand power of poetry is its interpretative power; by which I mean, not a power of drawing out in black and white an explanation of the mystery of the universe, but the power of so dealing with things as to awaken in us a wonderfully full, new, and intimate sense of them, and of our relations with them. When this sense is awakened in us, as to objects without us, we feel ourselves to be in contact with the essential nature of those objects, to be no longer bewildered and oppressed by them, but to have their secret, and to be in harmony with them; and this feeling calms and satisfies us as no other can. Poetry, indeed, interprets in another way besides this; but one of its two ways of interpreting, of exercising its highest power, is by awakening this sense in us. I will not now inquire whether this sense is illusive, whether it can be proved not to be illusive, whether it does absolutely make us possess the real nature of things; all I say is, that poetry can awaken it in us, and that to awaken it is one of the highest powers of poetry. The interpretations of science do not give us this intimate sense of objects as the interpretations of poetry give it; they appeal to a limited faculty, and not to the whole man. It is not Linnæus or Cavendish or Cuvier who gives us the true sense of animals, or water, or plants, who seizes their secret for us, who makes us participate in their life; it is Shakspeare, with his

"daffodils
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March of beauty;"

it is Wordsworth, with his

"voice . . . . heard
In spring-time from the cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides;"

it is Keats, with his

"moving waters at their priestlike task
Of cold ablution round Earth's human shores;"

it is Chateaubriand, with his, "*âme indéterminée des forêts;*" it is Senancour, with his mountain birch-tree: "*Cette écorce blanche, lisse et crevassée; cette tige agreste; ces branches qui s'inclinent vers la terre; la mobilité des feuilles, et tout cet abandon, simplicité de la nature, attitude des déserts.*"

Eminent manifestations of this magical power of poetry are very rare and very precious: the compositions of Guérin manifest it, I think, in singular eminence. Not his poems, strictly so called,—his verse,—so much as his prose; his poems in general take for their vehicle that favourite metre of French poetry, the Alexandrine; and, in my judgment, I confess they have thus, as compared with his prose, a great disadvantage to start with. In prose, the character of the vehicle for the composer's thoughts is not determined beforehand; every composer has to make his own vehicle; and who has ever done this more admirably than the great prose-writers of France,—Pascal, Bossuet, Fénelon, Voltaire? But in verse the composer has (with comparatively narrow liberty of modification) to accept his vehicle ready-made; it is therefore of vital importance to him that he should find at his disposal a vehicle adequate to convey the highest matters of poetry. We may even get a decisive test of the poetical power of a language and nation by ascertaining how far the principal poetical vehicle which they have employed, how far (in plainer words) the established national metre for high poetry, is adequate or inadequate. It seems to me that the established metre of this kind in France,—the Alexandrine,—is inadequate; that as a vehicle for high poetry it is greatly inferior to the hexameter or to the iambics of Greece (for example), or to the blank verse of England. Therefore the man of genius who uses it is at a disadvantage as compared with the man of genius who has for conveying his thoughts a more adequate vehicle, metrical or not. Racine is at a disadvantage as compared with Sophocles or Shakspeare, and he is likewise at a disadvantage as compared with Bossuet. The same may be said of our own poets of the eighteenth century, a century which gave them as the main vehicle for their high poetry a metre inadequate (as much as the French Alexandrine, and nearly in the same way) for this poetry,—the ten syllable couplet. It is worth remarking, that the English poet of the eighteenth century whose compositions wear best and give one the most entire satisfaction,—Gray,—hardly uses that couplet at all: this abstinence, however, limits Gray's productions to a few short compositions, and (exquisite as these are) he is a poetical nature repressed and without free issue. For English poetical production on a great scale, for an English poet deploying all the forces of his genius, the ten-syllable couplet was, in the eighteenth century, the established, one may almost say the inevitable, channel. Now this couplet, admirable (as Chaucer uses it) for story-telling not of the epic pitch, and often admirable for a few lines even in poetry of a very high pitch, is for continuous use in poetry of this latter kind inadequate. Pope, in his *Essay on Man*, is thus at a disadvantage compared with Lucretius in his poem on Nature: Lucretius has an adequate vehicle, Pope has not. Nay, though Pope's genius for didactic poetry was not less than that of Horace, while his satirical power was certainly greater, still one's taste receives, I cannot but think, a certain satisfaction when one reads the Epistle and Satires of Horace, which it fails to receive when one reads the Satires and Epistles of Pope. Of such avail is the superior adequacy of the vehicle used to compensate even an inferiority of genius in the user! In the same way Pope is at a disadvantage as compared with Addison: the best of Addison's composition (the "Coverley Papers" in the *Spectator*, for instance) wears better than the best of Pope's, because Addison has in his prose an intrinsically better vehicle for his genius than Pope in his couplet. But Bacon has no such advantage over Shakspeare; nor has Milton, writing prose (for no contemporary English prose-writer must be matched with Milton except Milton himself), any such advantage over Milton writing verse: indeed, the advantage here is all the other way.

It is in the prose remains of Guérin,—his journals, his letters, and the striking composition which I have already mentioned, the *Centaur*,—that his extraordinary gift manifests itself. He has a truly interpretative faculty; the most profound and delicate sense of the life of Nature, and the most exquisite felicity in finding expressions to render that sense. Brief notices of him the reader may have seen of him here and there in English or in foreign periodicals; but it is not likely that the two volumes of his remains will have met the eye of more than a very few of those who read this or that they will ever be widely circulated in this country. To all who love poetry, Guérin deserves to be something more that a name; and I shall try, in spite of the impossibility of doing justice to such a master of expression by translations, to make my English readers see for themselves how gifted an organisation his was, and how few artists have received from Nature a more magical faculty of interpreting her.

In the winter of the year 1832 there was collected in Brittany, around the well known Abbé Lamennais, a singular gathering. At a lonely place, La Chênaie, he had founded a religious retreat, to which disciples, attracted by his powers or by his reputation, repaired. Some came with the intention of preparing themselves for the ecclesiastical profession; others merely to profit by the society and discourse of so distinguished a master. Among the inmates were men whose names have since become known to all Europe,—Lacordaire and M. de Montalembert; there were others, who have acquired a reputation, not European, indeed, but considerable,—the Abbé Gerbet, the Abbé Rohrbacher; others, who have never quitted the shade of private life. The winter of 1832 was a period of crisis in the religious world of France: Lamennais's rupture with Rome, the condemnation of his opinions by the Pope, and his revolt against that condemnation, were imminent. Some of his followers, like Lacordaire, had already resolved not to cross the Rubicon with their leader, not to go into rebellion against Rome; they were preparing to separate from him. The Society of La Chênaie was soon to dissolve; but, such as it is shown to us for a moment, with its voluntary character, its simple and severe life in common, its mixture of lay and clerical members, the genius of its chiefs the sincerity of its disciples,—above all, its paramount fervent interest in matters of spiritual and religious concernment,—it offers a most instructive spectacle. It is not the spectacle we most of us think to find in France, the France we have imagined from common English notions, from the streets of Paris, from novels; it shows us how, wherever there is greatness like that of France, there are, as its foundation, treasures of fervour, pure-mindedness, and spirituality somewhere, whether we know of them or not;—a store of that which Goethe calls *Halt*;—since greatness can never be founded upon frivolity and corruption.

On the evening of the 18th of December in this year 1832, M. de Lamennais was talking to those assembled in the sitting-room of La Chênaie of his recent journey to Italy. He talked with all his usual animation; "but," writes one of his hearers, a Breton gentleman, M. de Marzan, "I soon became inattentive and absent, being struck with the reserved attitude of a young stranger some twenty-two years old, pale in face, his black hair already thin over his temples, with a southern eye, in which brightness and melancholy were mingled. He kept himself somewhat aloof, seeming to avoid notice rather than to court it. All the old faces of friends which I found about me at this my re-entry into the circle of La Chênaie failed to occupy me so much as the sight of this stranger, looking on, listening, observing, and saying nothing."

The unknown was Maurice de Guérin. Of a noble but poor family, having lost his mother at six years old, he had been brought up by his father, a man saddened by his wife's death, and austerely religious, at the château of Le Cayla, in Languedoc. His childhood was not gay; he had not the society of other boys; and solitude, the sight of his father's gloom, and the habit of accompanying the curé of the parish on his rounds among the sick and dying, made him prematurely grave and familiar with sorrow. He went to school first at Toulouse, then at the College Stanislas at Paris, with a temperament almost as unfit as Shelley's for common school life. His youth was ardent, sensitive, agitated, and unhappy. In 1832 he procured admission to La Chênaie to brace his spirit by the teaching of Lamennais, and to decide whether his religious feelings would determine themselves into a distinct religious vocation. Strong and deep religious feelings he had, implanted in him by nature, developed in him by the circumstances of his childhood; but he had also (and here is the key to his character) that temperament which opposes itself to the fixedness of a religious vocation, or to any vocation of which fixedness is an essential attribute—a temperament mobile, inconstant, eager, thirsting for new impressions, abhorring rules, aspiring to a "renovation without end;" a temperament common enough among artists, but with which few artists, who have it to the same degree as Guérin, unite a seriousness and a sad intensity like his. After leaving school, and before going to La Chênaie, he had been at home at Le Cayla with his sister Eugénie (a wonderfully gifted person, whose genius so competent a judge as M. Sainte-Beuve is inclined to pronounce even superior to her brother's) and his sister Eugénie's friends. With one of these friends he had fallen in love,—a slight and transient fancy, but which had already called his poetical powers into exercise; and his poems and fragments, in a certain green note-book (*le Cahier Vert*) which he long continued to make the depository of his thoughts, and which became famous among his friends, he brought with him to La Chênaie. There he found among the younger members of the Society several who, like himself, had a secret passion for poetry and literature; with these he became intimate, and in his letters and journal we find him occupied, now with a literary commerce established with these friends, now with the fortunes, fast coming to a crisis, of the Society, and now with that for the sake of which he came to La Chênaie,—his religious progress and the state of his soul.

On Christmas-day, 1832, having been then three weeks at La Chênaie, he writes thus of it to a friend of his family, M. de Bayne:—

"La Chênaie is a sort of oasis in the midst of the steppes of Brittany. In front of the château stretches a very large garden cut in two by a terrace with a lime avenue, at the end of which is a tiny chapel. I am extremely fond of this little oratory, where one breathes a twofold peace,—the peace of solitude and the peace of the Lord. When spring comes we shall walk to prayers between two borders of flowers. On the east side, and only a few yards from the château, sleeps a small mere between two woods, where the birds in warm weather sing all day long; and then,—right, left, on all sides,—woods, woods, everywhere woods. It looks desolate just now that all is bare and the woods are rust-colour, and under this Brittany sky, which is always clouded and so low that it seems as if it were going to fall on your head; but as soon as spring comes the sky raises itself up, the woods come to life again, and everything will be full of charm."

Of what La Chênaie will be when spring comes he has a foretaste on the 3rd of March.

"To-day" (he writes in his journal) "has enchanted me. For the first time for a long while the sun has shown himself in all his beauty. He has made the buds of the leaves and flowers swell, and he has waked up in me a thousand happy thoughts. The clouds assume more and more their light and graceful shapes, and are sketching, over the blue sky, the most charming fancies. The woods have not yet got their leaves, but they are taking an indescribable air of life and gaiety, which gives them quite a new physiognomy. Everything is getting ready for the great festival of Nature."

Storm and snow adjourn this festival a little longer. On the 11th of March he writes:—

"It has snowed all night. I have been to look at our primroses; each of them has its small load of snow, and was bowing its head under its burden. These pretty flowers, with their rich yellow colour, had a charming effect under their white hoods. I saw whole tufts of them roofed over by a single block of snow; all these laughing flowers thus shrouded and leaning one upon another, made one think of a group of young girls surprised by a wave, and sheltering under a white cloth."

The burst of spring comes at last, though late. On the 5th of April we find Guérin "sitting in the sun to penetrate himself to the very marrow with the divine spring." On the 3rd of May, "one can actually *see* the progress of the green; it has made a start from the garden to the shrubberies, it is getting the upper hand all along the mere; it leaps, one may say, from tree to tree, from thicket to thicket, in the fields and on the hill-sides; and I can see it already arrived at the forest edge and beginning to spread itself over the broad back of the forest. Soon it will have over-run everything as far as the eye can reach, and all those wide spaces between here and the horizon will be moving and sounding like one vast sea, a sea of emerald."

Finally, on the 16th of May, he writes to M. de Bayne that "the gloomy and bad days,—bad because they bring temptation by their gloom,—are, thanks to God and the spring, over; and I see approaching a long file of shining and happy days, to do me all the good in the world. This Brittany of ours," he continues, "gives one the idea of the grayest and most wrinkled old woman possible suddenly changed back by the touch of a fairy's wand into a girl of twenty, and one of the loveliest in the world; the fine weather has so decked and beautified the dear old country." He felt, however, the cloudiness and cold of the "dear old country" with all the sensitiveness of a child of the South. "What a difference," he cries, "between the sky of Brittany, even on the finest day, and the sky of our South! Here the summer has, even on its high days and holidays, something mournful, overcast, and stinted about it. It is like a miser who is making a show; there is a niggardliness in his magnificence. Give me our Languedoc sky, so bountiful of light, so blue, so largely vaulted!" And somewhat later, complaining of the short and dim sunlight of a February day in Paris, "What a sunshine," he exclaims, "to gladden eyes accustomed to all the wealth of light of the South!—*aux larges et libérales effusions de lumière du ciel du Midi.*"

In the long winter of La Chênaie his great resource was literature. One has often heard that an educated Frenchman's reading seldom goes much beyond French and Latin, and that he makes the authors in these two languages his sole literary standard. This may or may not be true of Frenchmen in general, but there can be no question as to the width of the reading of Guérin and his friends, and as to the range of their literary sympathies. One of the circle, Hippolyte la Morvonnais,—a poet who published a volume of verse, and died in the prime of life,—had a passionate admiration for Wordsworth, and had even, it is said, made a pilgrimage to Rydal Mount to visit him; and in Guérin's own reading I find, besides the French names of Bernardin, de St Pierre, Chateaubriand, Lamartine, and Victor Hugo, the names of Homer, Dante, Shakspeare, Milton, and Goethe; and he quotes both from Greek and from English authors in the original. His literary tact is beautifully fine and true. "Every poet," he writes to his sister, "has his own art of poetry written on the ground of his own soul; there is no other. Be constantly observing Nature in her smallest details, and then write as the current of your thoughts guides you;—that is all." But with all this freedom from the bondage of forms and rules, Guérin marks with perfect precision the faults of the *free* French literature of his time,—the *littérature facile*,—and judges the romantic school and its prospects like a master: "that youthful literature which has put forth all its blossom prematurely, and has left itself a helpless prey to the returning frost, stimulated as it has been by the burning sun of our century, by this atmosphere charged with a perilous heat, which has over-hastened every sort of development, and will most likely reduce to a handful of grains the harvest of our age." And the popular authors,—those "whose name appears once and disappears for ever, whose books, unwelcome to all serious people, welcome to the rest of the world, to novelty-hunters and novel-readers, fill with vanity these vain souls, and then, falling from hands heavy with the languor of satiety, drop for ever into the gulf of oblivion;" and those, more noteworthy, "the writers of books celebrated, and, as works of art, deserving celebrity, but which have in them not one grain of that hidden manna, not one of those sweet and wholesome thoughts which nourish the human soul and refresh it when it is weary,"—these he treats with such severity that he may in some sense be described, as he describes himself, as "invoking with his whole heart a classical restoration." He is best described, however, not as a partisan of any school, but as an ardent seeker for that mode of expression which is the most natural, happy, and true. He writes to his sister Eugénie:—

"I want you to reform your system of composition; it is too loose, too vague, too Lamartinian. Your verse is too sing-song; it does not *talk* enough. Form for yourself a style of your own, which shall be your real expression. Study the French language by attentive reading, making it your care to remark constructions, turns of expression, delicacies of style, but without ever adopting the manner of any master. In the works of these masters we must learn our language, but we must use it each in our own fashion."[1]

It was not, however, to perfect his literary judgment that Guérin came to La Chênaie. The religious feeling, which was as much a part of his essence as the passion for Nature and the literary instinct, shows itself at moments jealous of these its rivals, and alarmed at their predominance. Like all powerful feelings, it wants to exclude every other feeling and to be absolute. One Friday in April, after he has been delighting himself with the shapes of the clouds and the progress of the spring, he suddenly bethinks himself that the day is Good Friday, and exclaims in his diary:—

"My God, what is my soul about that it can thus go running after such fugitive delights on Good Friday, on this day all filled with Thy death and our redemption. There is in me I know not what damnable spirit, that awakens in me strong discontents, and is for ever prompting me to rebel against the holy exercises and the devout collectedness of soul which are the meet preparation for these great solemnities of our faith. Oh how well can I trace here the old leaven, from which I have not yet perfectly cleared my soul!"

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[1] Part of these extracts date from a time a little after Guérin's residence at La Chênaie; but already, amidst the readings and conversations of La Chênaie, his literary judgment was perfectly formed.

And again, in a letter to M. de Marzan: "Of what, my God, are we made," he cries, "that a little verdure and a few trees should be enough to rob us of our tranquillity and to distract us from Thy love?" And writing, three days after Easter Sunday, in his journal, he records the reception at La Chênaie of a fervent neophyte, in words which seem to convey a covert blame of his own want of fervency:—

"Three days have passed over our heads since the great festival. One anniversary the less for us yet to spend of the death and resurrection of our Saviour! Every year thus bears away with it its solemn festivals; when will the everlasting festival be here? I have been witness of a most touching sight; François has brought us one of his friends whom he has gained to the faith. This neophyte joined us in our exercises during the Holy week, and on Easter day he received the communion with us. François was in raptures. It is a truly good work which he has thus done. François is quite young, hardly twenty years old; M. de la M. is thirty, and is married. There is something most touching and beautifully simple in M. de la M. letting himself thus be brought to God by quite a young man; and to see friendship, on François's side, thus doing the work of an Apostle, is not less beautiful and touching."

Admiration for Lamennais worked in the same direction with this feeling. Lamennais never appreciated Guérin; his combative, rigid, despotic nature, of which the characteristic was energy, had no affinity with Guérin's elusive, undulating, impalpable nature, of which the characteristic was delicacy. He set little store by his new disciple, and could hardly bring himself to understand what others found so remarkable in him, his own genuine feeling towards him being one of indulgent compassion. But the intuition of Guérin, more discerning than the logic of his master, instinctively felt what there was commanding and tragic in Lamennais's character, different as this was from his own; and some of his notes are among the most interesting records of Lamennais which remain.

"'Do you know what it is,' M. Féli[1] said to us on the evening of the day before yesterday, 'which makes man the most suffering of all creatures? It is that he has one foot in the finite and the other in the infinite, and that he is torn asunder, not by four horses, as in the horrible old times, but between two worlds.' Again he said to us as we heard the clock strike: 'if that clock knew that it was to be destroyed the next instant, it would still keep striking its hour until that instant arrived. My children, be as the clock; whatever may be going to happen to you, strike always your hour.'"

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[1] The familiar name given to M. de Lamennais by his followers at La Chênaie.

Another time Guérin writes:

"To-day M. Féli startled us. He was sitting behind the chapel, under the two Scotch firs; he took his stick and marked out a grave on the turf, and said to Elie, 'It is there I wish to be buried, but no tombstone! only a simple hillock of grass. Oh, how well I shall be there!' Elie thought he had a presentiment that his end was near. This is not the first time he has been visited by such a presentiment; when he was setting out for Rome, he said to those here: 'I do not expect ever to come back to you; you must do the good which I have failed to do.' He is impatient for death."

Overpowered by the ascendency of Lamennais, Guérin, in spite of his hesitations, in spite of his confession to himself that, "after three weeks' close scrutiny of his soul, in the hope of finding the pearl of a religious vocation hidden in some corner of it," he had failed to find what he sought, took, at the end of August 1833, a decisive step. He joined the religious order which Lamennais had founded. But at this very moment the deepening displeasure of Rome with Lamennais determined the Bishop of Rennes to break up, in so far as it was a religious congregation, the Society of La Chênaie, to transfer the novices to Ploërmel, and to place them under other superintendence. In September, Lamennais, "who had not yet ceased," writes M. de Marzan, a fervent Catholic, "to be a Christian and a priest, took leave of his beloved colony of La Chênaie, with the anguish of a general who disbands his army down to the last recruit, and withdraws annihilated from the field of battle." Guérin went to Ploërmel. But here, in the seclusion of a real religious house, he instantly perceived how alien to a spirit like his,—a spirit which, as he himself says somewhere, "had need of the open air, wanted to see the sun and the flowers,"—was the constraint and monotony of a monastic life, when Lamennais's genius was no longer present to enliven this life for him. On the 7th of October he renounced the novitiate, believing himself a partisan of Lamennais in his quarrel with Rome, reproaching the life he had left with demanding passive obedience instead of trying "to put in practice the admirable alliance of order with liberty, and of variety with unity," and declaring that, for his part, he preferred taking the chances of a life of adventure to submitting himself to be "*garotté par un réglement*,—tied hand and foot by a set of rules." In real truth, a life of adventure, or rather a life free to wander at its own will, was that to which his nature irresistibly impelled him.

For a career of adventure, the inevitable field was Paris. But before this career began, there came a stage, the smoothest, perhaps, and the most happy in the short life of Guérin. M. la Morvonnais, one of his La Chênaie friends, —some years older than Guérin, and married to a wife of singular sweetness and charm,—had a house by the seaside at the mouth of one of the beautiful rivers of Brittany, the Arguenon. He asked Guérin, when he left Ploërmel, to come and stay with him at this place, called Le Val de l'Arguenon, and Guérin spent the winter of 1833-4 there. I grudge every word about Le Val and its inmates which is not Guérin's own, so charming is the picture he draws of them, so truly does his talent find itself in its best vein as he draws it.

"How full of goodness" (he writes in his journal of the 7th of December) "is Providence to me! For fear the sudden passage from the mild and temperate air of a religious life to the torrid clime of the world should be too trying for my soul, it has conducted me, after I have left my sacred shelter, to a house planted on the frontier between the two regions, where, without being in solitude, one is not yet in the world; a house whose windows look on the one side towards the plain where the tumult of men is rocking, on the other towards the wilderness where the servants of God are chanting. I intend to write down the record of my sojourn here, for the days here spent are full of happiness, and I know that in the time to come I shall often turn back to the story of these past felicities. A man, pious, and a poet; a woman, whose spirit is in such perfect sympathy with his that you would say they had but one being between them; a child, called Marie like her mother, and who sends, like a star, the first rays of her love and thought through the white cloud of infancy; a simple life in an old-fashioned house; the ocean, which comes morning and evening to bring us its harmonies; and lastly, a wanderer who descends from Carmel and is going on to Babylon, and who has laid down at this threshold his staff and his sandals, to take his seat at the hospitable table;—here is matter to make a biblical poem of, if I could only describe things as I can feel them!"

Every line written by Guérin during this stay at Le Val is worth quoting, but I have only room for one extract more:—

"Never" (he writes, a fortnight later, on the 20th of December), "never have I tasted so inwardly and deeply the happiness of home-life. All the little details of this life, which in their succession make up the day, are to me so many stages of a continuous charm carried from one end of the day to the other. The morning greeting, which in some sort renews the pleasure of the first arrival, for the words with which one meets are almost the same, and the separation at night, through the hours of darkness and uncertainty, does not ill represent longer separations; then breakfast, during which you have the fresh enjoyment of having met together again; the stroll afterwards, when we go out and bid Nature good-morning; the return and setting to work in an old panelled chamber looking out on the sea, inaccessible to all the stir of the house, a perfect sanctuary of labour; dinner, to which we are called, not by a bell, which reminds one too much of school or a great house, but by a pleasant voice; the gaiety, the merriment, the talk flitting from one subject to another and never dropping so long as the meal lasts; the crackling fire of dry branches to which we draw our chairs directly afterwards, the kind words that are spoken round the warm flame which sings while we talk; and then, if it is fine, the walk by the seaside, when the sea has for its visitors a mother with her child in her arms, this child's father and a stranger, each of these two last with a stick in his hand; the rosy lips of the little girl, which keep talking at the same time with the waves,—now and then tears shed by her and cries of childish fright at the edge of the sea; our thoughts, the father's and mine, as we stand and look at the mother and child smiling at one another, or at the child in tears and the mother trying to comfort it by her caresses and exhortations; the Ocean, going on all the while rolling up his waves and noises; the dead boughs which we go and cut, here and there, out of the copse-wood, to make a quick and bright fire when we get home,—this little taste of the woodman's calling which brings us closer to Nature and makes us think of M. Féli's eager fondness for the same work; the hours of study and poetical flow which carry us to supper-time; this meal, which summons us by the same gentle voice as its predecessor, and which is passed amid the same joys, only less loud, because evening sobers everything, tones everything down; then our evening, ushered in by the blaze of a cheerful fire, and which with its alternations of reading and talking brings us at last to bedtime:—to all the charms of a day so spent add the dreams which follow it, and your imagination will still fall far short of these home-joys in their delightful reality."

I said the foregoing should be my last extract, but who could resist this picture of a January evening on the coast of Brittany?—

"All the sky is covered over with grey clouds just silvered at the edges. The sun, who departed a few minutes ago, has left behind him enough light to temper for awhile the black shadows, and to soften down, as it were, the approach of night. The winds are hushed, and the tranquil Ocean sends up to me, when I go out on the doorstep to listen, only a melodious murmur, which dies away in the soul like a beautiful wave on the beach. The birds, the first to obey the nocturnal influence, make their way towards the woods, and you hear the rustle of their wings in the clouds. The copses which cover the whole hill-side of Le Val, which all the day-time are alive with the chirp of the wren, the laughing whistle of the woodpecker,[1] and the different notes of a multitude of birds, have no longer any sound in their paths and thickets, unless it be the prolonged high call of the blackbirds at play with one another and chasing one another, after all the other birds have their heads safe under their wings. The noise of man, always the last to be silent, dies gradually out over the face of the fields. The general murmur fades away, and one hears hardly a sound except what comes from the villages and hamlets, in which, up till far into the night, there are cries of children and barking of dogs. Silence wraps me round; everything seeks repose except this pen of mine, which perhaps disturbs the rest of some living atom asleep in a crease of my note-book, for it makes its light scratching as it puts down these idle thoughts. Let it stop, then! for all I write, have written, or shall write, will never be worth setting against the sleep of an atom."

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[1] "The woodpecker *laughs*," says White of Selborne; and here is Guérin, in Brittany, confirming his testimony.

On the 1st of February we find him in a lodging at Paris. "I enter the world" (such are the last words written in his journal at Le Val) "with a secret horror." His outward history for the next five years is soon told. He found himself in Paris, poor, fastidious, and with health which already, no doubt, felt the obscure presence of the malady of which he died—consumption. One of his Brittany acquaintances introduced him to editors, tried to engage him in the periodical literature of Paris; and so unmistakable was Guérin's talent that even his first essays were immediately accepted. But Guérin's genius was of a kind which unfitted him to get his bread in this manner. At first he was pleased with the notion of living by his pen; "*je n'ai qu'à écrire*," he says to his sister,—"I have only got to write." But to a nature like his, endued with the passion for perfection, the necessity to produce, to produce constantly, to produce whether in the vein or out of the vein, to produce something good or bad or middling, as it may happen, but at all events *something*,—is the most intolerable of tortures. To escape from it he betook himself to that common but most perfidious refuge of men of letters, that refuge to which Goldsmith and poor Hartley Coleridge had betaken themselves before him,—the profession of teaching. In September 1834 he procured an engagement at the Collège Stanislas, where he had himself been educated. It was vacation-time, and all he had to do was to teach a small class composed of boys who did not go home for the holidays,—in his own words, "scholars left like sick sheep in the fold, while the rest of the flock are frisking in the fields." After the vacation he was kept on at the college as a supernumerary.

"The master of the fifth class has asked for a month's leave of absence; I am taking his place, and by this work I get one hundred francs (£4). I have been looking about for pupils to give private lessons to, and I have found three or four. Schoolwork and private lessons together fill my day from half-past seven in the morning till half-past nine at night. The college dinner serves me for breakfast, and I go and dine in the evening at twenty-four *sous*, as a young man beginning life should." To better his position in the hierarchy of public teachers it was necessary that he should take the degree of *agrégé èslettres*, corresponding to our degree of Master of Arts; and to his heavy work in teaching, there was thus added that of preparing for a severe examination. The drudgery of this life was very irksome to him, although less insupportable than the drudgery of the profession of letters; inasmuch as to a sensitive man like Guérin, to silence his genius is more tolerable than to hackney it. Still the yoke wore him deeply, and he had moments of bitter revolt; he continued, however, to bear it with resolution, and on the whole with patience, for four years. On the 15th of November 1838 he married a young Creole lady of some fortune, Mademoiselle Caroline de Gervain, "whom," to use his own words, "Destiny, who loves these surprises, has wafted from the farthest Indies into my arms." The marriage was happy, and it ensured to Guérin liberty and leisure; but now "the blind Fury with the abhorred shears" was hard at hand. Consumption declared itself in him: "I pass my life," he writes, with his old playfulness and calm, to his sister on the 8th of April 1839, "within my bed-curtains, and wait patiently enough, thanks to Caro's[1] goodness, books, and dreams, for the recovery which the sunshine is to bring with it." In search of this sunshine he was taken to his native country, Languedoc, but in vain. He died at Le Cayla on the 19th of July 1839.

The vicissitudes of his inward life during these five years were more considerable. His opinions and tastes underwent great, or what seem to be great, changes. He came to Paris the ardent partisan of Lamennais: even in April 1834, after Rome had finally condemned Lamennais,—"To-night there will go forth from Paris," he writes, "with his face set to the East, a man whose every step I would fain follow, and who returns to the desert for which I sigh. M. Féli departs this evening for La Chênaie." But in October 1835,—"I assure you," he writes to his sister, "I am at last weaned from M. de Lamennais; one does not remain a babe and suckling for ever; I am perfectly freed from his influence." There was a greater change than this. In 1834 the main cause of Guérin's aversion to the literature of the French romantic school, was that this literature, having had a religious origin, had ceased to be religious: "it has forgotten," he says, "the house and the admonitions of its Father." But his friend M. de Marzan tells us of a "deplorable revolution" which, by 1836, had taken place in him. Guérin had become intimate with the chiefs of this very literature; he no longer went to church; "the bond of a common faith, in which our friendship had its birth, existed between us no longer." Then, again, "this interregnum was not destined to last." Reconverted to his old faith by suffering and by the pious efforts of his sister Eugénie, Guérin died a Catholic. His feelings about society underwent a like change. After "entering the world with a secret horror," after congratulating himself when he had been some months at Paris on being "disengaged from the social tumult, out of the reach of those blows which, when I live in the thick of the world, bruise me, irritate me, or utterly crush me," M. Sainte-Beuve tell us of him, two years afterwards, appearing in Society "a man of the world, elegant, even fashionable; a talker who could hold his own against the most brilliant talkers of Paris."

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[1] His wife.

In few natures, however, is there really such essential consistency as in Guérin's. He says of himself, in the very beginning of his journal: "I owe everything to poetry, for there is no other name to give to the sum total of my thoughts; I owe to it whatever I now have pure, lofty, and solid in my soul; I owe to it all my consolations in the past; I shall probably owe to it my future." Poetry, the poetical instinct, was indeed the basis of his nature; but to say so thus absolutely is not quite enough. One aspect of poetry fascinated Guérin's imagination and held it prisoner. Poetry is the interpretress of the natural world, and she is the interpretress of the moral world; it was as the interpretress of the natural world that she had Guérin for her mouthpiece. To make magically near and real the life of

Nature, and man's life only so far as it is a part of that Nature, was his faculty; a faculty of naturalistic, not of moral interpretation. This faculty always has for its basis a peculiar temperament, an extraordinary delicacy of organisation and susceptibility to impressions; in exercising it the poet is in a great degree passive (Wordsworth thus speaks of a *wise passiveness*); he aspires to be a sort of human Æolian harp, catching and rendering every rustle of Nature. To assist at the evolution of the whole life of the world is his craving, and intimately to feel it all:

. . . "the glow, the thrill of life,
Where, where do these abound?"

is what he asks: he resists being riveted and held stationary by any single impression, but would be borne on for ever down an enchanted stream. He goes into religion and out of religion, into society and out of society, not from the motives which impel men in general, but to feel what it is all like; he is thus hardly a moral agent, and, like the passive and ineffectual Uranus of Keats's poem, he may say:

. . . . . . "I am but a voice;
My life is but the life of winds and tides;
No more than winds and tides can I avail."

He hovers over the tumult of life, but does not really put his hand to it.

No one has expressed the aspirations of this temperament better than Guérin himself. In the last year of his life he writes:—

"I return, as you see, to my old brooding over the world of Nature, that line which my thoughts irresistibly take; a sort of passion which gives me enthusiasm, tears, bursts of joy, and an eternal food for musing; and yet I am neither philosopher nor naturalist, nor anything learned whatsoever. There is one word which is the God of my imagination, the tyrant, I ought rather to say, that fascinates it, lures it onward, gives it work to do without ceasing, and will finally carry it I know not where; the word *life*."

And in one place in his journal he says:—

"My imagination welcomes every dream, every impression, without attaching itself to any, and goes on for ever seeking something new."

And again in another:—

"The longer I live, and the clearer I discern between true and false in society, the more does the inclination to live, not as a savage or a misanthrope, but as a solitary man on the frontiers of society, on the outskirts of the world, gain strength and grow in me. The birds come and go and make nests around our habitations, they are fellow-citizens of our farms and hamlets with us; but they take their flight in a heaven which is boundless, but the hand of God alone gives and measures to them their daily food, but they build their nests in the heart of the thick bushes, or hang them in the height of the trees. So would I, too, live, hovering round society, and having always at my back a field of liberty vast as the sky."

In the same spirit he longed for travel. "When one is a wanderer," he writes to his sister, "one feels that one fulfils the true condition of humanity." And the last entry in his journal is,—"The stream of travel is full of delight. Oh, who will set me adrift on this Nile!"

Assuredly it is not in this temperament that the active virtues have their rise. On the contrary, this temperament, considered in itself alone, indisposes for the discharge of them. Something morbid and excessive, as manifested in Guérin, it undoubtedly has. In him, as in Keats, and as in another youth of genius, whose name, but the other day unheard of, is henceforth written in the history of English poetry,—David Gray,—the temperament, the talent itself, is deeply influenced by their mysterious malady; the temperament is *devouring;* it uses vital power too hard and too fast, paying the penalty in long hours of unutterable exhaustion and in premature death. The intensity of Guérin's depression is described to us by Guérin himself with the same incomparable touch with which he describes happier feelings; far oftener than any pleasurable sense of his gift he has "the sense profound, near, immense, of my misery, of my inward poverty." And again: "My inward misery gains upon me; I no longer dare look within." And on another day of gloom he does look within, and here is the terrible analysis:—

"Craving, unquiet, seeing only by glimpses, my spirit is stricken by all those ills which are the sure fruit of a youth doomed never to ripen into manhood. I grow old and wear myself out in the most futile mental strainings, and make no progress. My head seems dying, and when the wind blows I fancy I feel it, as if I were a tree, blowing through a number of withered branches in my top. Study is intolerable to me, or rather it is quite out of my power. Mental work brings on, not drowsiness, but an irritable and nervous disgust which drives me out, I know not where, into the streets and public places. The Spring, whose delights used to come every year stealthily and mysteriously to charm me in my retreat, crushes me this year under a weight of sudden hotness. I should be glad of any event which delivered me from the situation in which I am. If I were free I would embark for some distant country where I could begin life anew."

Such is this temperament in the frequent hours when the sense of its own weakness and isolation crushes it to the ground. Certainly it was not for Guérin's happiness, or for Keats's, as men count happiness, to be as they were. Still the very excess and predominance of their temperament has given to the fruits of their genius a unique brilliancy and flavour. I have said that poetry interprets in two ways; it interprets by expressing with magical felicity the physiognomy and movement of the outward world, and it interprets by expressing, with inspired conviction, the ideas and laws of the inward world of man's moral and spiritual nature. In other words, poetry is interpretative both by having *natural magic* in it, and by having *moral profundity*. In both ways it illuminates man; it gives him a satisfying sense of reality; it reconciles him with himself and the universe. Thus Æschylus's "*δράσαντι παθεῖν*" and his "*ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα*" are alike interpretative. Shakspeare interprets both when he says,

> "Full many a glorious morning have I seen,
> Flatter the mountain-tops with sovran eye;"

and when he says,

> "There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them as we will."

These great poets unite in themselves the faculty of both kinds of interpretation, the naturalistic and the moral. But it is observable that in the poets who unite both kinds, the latter (the moral) usually ends by making itself the master. In Shakspeare the two kinds seem wonderfully to balance one another; but even in him the balance leans; his expression tends to become too little sensuous and simple, too much intellectualised. The same thing may be yet more strongly affirmed of Lucretius and of Wordsworth. In Shelley there is not a balance of the two gifts, nor even a co-existence of them, but there is a passionate straining after them both, and this is what makes Shelley, as a man, so interesting: I will not now inquire how much Shelley achieves as a poet, but whatever he achieves, he in general fails to achieve natural magic in his expression; in Mr Palgrave's charming *Treasury* may be seen a gallery of his failures.[1] ~~But in~~ Keats and Guérin, in whom the faculty of naturalistic interpretation is overpoweringly predominant, the natural magic is perfect; when they speak of the world they speak like Adam naming by divine inspiration the creatures; their expression corresponds with the thing's essential reality. Even between Keats and Guérin, however, there is a distinction to be drawn. Keats has, above all, a sense of what is pleasurable and open in the life of nature; for him she is the *Alma Parens:* his expression has, therefore, more than Guérin's, something genial, outward, and sensuous. Guérin has, above all, a sense of what there is adorable and secret in the life of Nature; for him she is the *Magna Parens;* his expression has, therefore, more than Keats's, something mystic, inward, and profound.

So he lived like a man possessed; with his eye not on his own career, not on the public, not on fame, but on the Isis whose veil he had uplifted. He published nothing: "There is more power and beauty," he writes, "in the well-kept secret of one's-self and one's thoughts, than in the display of a whole heaven that one may have inside one." "My spirit," he answers the friends who urge him to write,

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[1] Compare, for example, his "Lines Written in the Euganean Hills," with Keats's "Ode to Autumn" (*Golden Treasury*, pp. 256, 284). The latter piece *renders* Nature; the former *tries* to *render* her. I will not deny, however, that Shelley has natural magic in his rhythm; what I deny is, that he has it in his language. It always seems to me that the right sphere for Shelley's genius was the sphere of music, not of poetry; the medium of sounds he can master, but to master the more difficult medium of words he has neither intellectual force enough nor sanity enough.

"is of the home-keeping order, and has no fancy for adventure; literary adventure is above all distasteful to it; for this, indeed (let me say so without the least self-sufficiency), it has a contempt. The literary career seems to me unreal, both in its own essence and in the rewards which one seeks from it, and therefore fatally marred by a secret absurdity." His acquaintances, and among them distinguished men of letters, full of admiration for the originality and delicacy of his talent, laughed at his self-depreciation, warmly assured him of his powers. He received their assurances with a mournful incredulity, which contrasts curiously with the self-assertion of poor David Gray, whom I just now mentioned. "It seems to me intolerable," he writes, "to appear to men other than one appears to God. My worst torture at this moment is the over-estimate which generous friends form of me. We are told that at the last judgment the secret of all consciences will be laid bare to the universe; would that mine were so this day, and that every passer-by could see me as I am!" "High above my head," he says at another time, "far, far away, I seem to hear the murmur of that world of thought and feeling to which I aspire so often, but where I can never attain. I think of those of my own age who have wings strong enough to reach it, but I think of them without jealousy, and as men on earth contemplate the elect and their felicity." And, criticising his own composition, "When I begin a subject, my self-conceit" (says this exquisite artist) "imagines I am doing wonders; and when I have finished, I see nothing but a wretched made-up imitation, composed of odds and ends of colour stolen from other people's palettes, and tastelessly mixed together on mine." Such was his *passion for perfection*, his disdain for all poetical work not perfectly adequate and felicitous. The magic of expression, to which by the force of this passion he won his way, will make the name of Maurice de Guérin remembered in literature.

I have already mentioned the *Centaur*, a sort of prose poem by Guérin, which Madame Sand published after his death. The idea of this composition came to him, M. Sainte-Beuve says, in the course of some visits which he made with his friend, M. Trebutien, a learned antiquarian, to the Museum of Antiquities in the Louvre. The free and wild life which the Greeks expressed by such creations as the Centaur had, as we might well expect, a strong charm for him; under the same inspiration he composed a *Bacchante*, which is lost, and which was meant by him to form part of a prose poem on the adventures of Bacchus in India. Real as was the affinity which Guérin's nature had for these subjects, I doubt whether, in treating them, he would have found the full and final employment of his talent. But the beauty of his *Centaur* is extraordinary; in its whole conception and expression this piece has in a wonderful degree that natural magic of which I have said so much, and the rhythm has a charm which bewitches even a foreigner. An old Centaur on his mountain is supposed to relate to Melampus, a human questioner, the life of his youth. Untranslatable as the piece is, I shall conclude with some extracts from it:—

"I had my birth in the caves of these mountains. Like the stream of this valley, whose first drops trickle from some weeping rock in a deep cavern, the first moment of my life fell in the darkness of a remote abode, and without breaking the silence. When our mothers draw near to the time of their delivery, they withdraw to the caverns, and in the depth of the loneliest of them, in the thickest of its gloom, bring forth, without uttering a plaint, a fruit silent as themselves. Their puissant milk makes us surmount, without weakness or dubious struggle, the first difficulties of life; and yet we leave our caverns later than you your cradles. The reason is that we have a doctrine that the early days of existence should be kept apart and enshrouded, as days filled with the presence of the gods. Nearly the whole term of my growth was passed in the darkness where I was born. The recesses of my dwelling ran so far under the mountain that I should not have known on which side was the exit, had not the winds, when they sometimes made their way through the opening, sent fresh airs in, and a sudden trouble. Sometimes, too, my mother came back to me, having about her the odours of the valleys, or streaming from the waters which were her haunt. Her returning thus, without a word said of the valleys or the rivers, but with the emanations from them hanging about her, troubled my spirit, and I moved up and down restlessly in my darkness. 'What is it,' I cried, 'this outside world whither my mother is borne, and what reigns there in it so potent as to attract her so often?' At these moments my own force began to make me unquiet. I felt in it a power which could not remain idle; and betaking myself either to toss my arms or to gallop backwards and forwards in the spacious darkness of the cavern, I tried to make out from the blows which I dealt in the empty space, or from the transport of my course through it, in what direction my arms were meant to reach or my feet to bear me. Since that day, I have wound my arms round the bust of Centaurs, and round the body of heroes, and round the trunks of oaks; my hands have assayed the rocks, the waters, plants without number, and the subtlest impressions of the air,—for I uplift them in the dark and still nights to catch the breaths of wind, and to draw signs whereby I may augur my road; my feet,—look, O Melampus, how worn they are! And yet, all benumbed as I am in this extremity of age, there are days when, in broad sunlight, on the mountain-tops, I renew these gallopings of my youth in the cavern, and with the same object, brandishing my arms and employing all the fleetness which yet is left to me.

. . . .

"O Melampus, thou who wouldst know the life of the Centaurs, wherefore have the gods willed that thy steps should lead thee to me, the oldest and most forlorn of them all? It is long since I have ceased to practise any part of their life. I quit no more this mountain summit, to which age has confined me. The point of my arrows now serves me only to uproot some tough-fibred plant; the tranquil lakes know me still, but the rivers have forgotten me. I will tell thee a little of my youth; but these recollections, issuing from a worn memory, come like the drops of a niggardly libation poured from a damaged urn.

"The course of my youth was rapid and full of agitation. Movement was my life, and my steps knew no bound. One day when I was following the course of a valley seldom entered by the Centaurs, I discovered a man making his way up the stream-side on the opposite bank. He was the first whom my eyes had lighted on: I despised him. 'Behold,' I cried, 'at the utmost but the half of what I am! Doubtless he is a Centaur overthrown by the gods, and reduced by them to drag himself along thus.'

. . . .

"Wandering along at my own will like the rivers, feeling wherever I went the presence of Cybele, whether in the bed of the valleys, or on the height of the mountains, I bounded whither I would, like a blind and chainless life. But when Night, filled with the charm of the gods, overtook me on the slopes of the mountain, she guided me to the mouth of the caverns, and there tranquillised me as she tranquillises the billows of the sea. Stretched across the threshold of my retreat, my flanks hidden within the cave, and my head under the open sky, I watched the spectacle of the dark. The sea-gods, it is said, quit, during the hours of darkness their palaces under the deep; they seat themselves on the promontories, and their eyes wander over the expanse of the waves. Even so I kept watch, having at my feet an expanse of life like the hushed sea. My regards had free range, and travelled to the most distant points. Like sea-beaches which never lose their wetness, the line of mountains to the west retained the imprint of gleams not perfectly wiped out by the shadows. In that quarter still survived, in pale clearness, mountain-summits naked and pure. There I beheld at one time the god Pan descend, ever solitary; at another, the choir of mystic divinities; or I saw pass some mountain nymph charm-struck by the night. Sometimes the eagles of Mount Olympus traversed the upper sky, and were lost to view among the far-off constellations, or in the shade of the dreaming forests.

"Thou pursuest after wisdom, O Melampus, which is the science of the will of the gods; and thou roamest from people to people like a mortal driven by the destinies. In the times when I kept my night-watches before the caverns, I have sometimes believed that I was about to surprise the thought of the sleeping Cybele, and that the mother of the gods, betrayed by her dreams, would let fall some of her secrets; but I have never made out more than sounds which faded away in the murmur of night, or words inarticulate as the bubbling of the rivers.

"'O Macareus,' one day said the great Chiron to me, whose old age I tended; 'we are, both of us, Centaurs of the mountain; but how different are our lives! Of my days all the study is (thou seest it) the search for plants; thou, thou art like those mortals who have picked up on the waters or in the woods, and carried to their lips, some pieces of the reed-pipe thrown away by the god Pan. From that hour these mortals, having caught from their relics of the god a passion for wild life, or perhaps smitten with some secret madness, enter into the wilderness, plunge among the forests, follow the course of the streams, bury themselves in the heart of the mountains, restless, and haunted by an unknown purpose. The mares beloved of the winds in the farthest Scythia are not wilder than thou, nor more cast down at nightfall, when the North Wind has departed. Seekest thou to know the gods, O Macareus, and from what source men, animals, and the elements of the universal fire have their origin? But the aged Ocean, the father of all things, keeps locked within his own breast these secrets; and the nymphs, who stand around, sing as they weave their eternal dance before him, to cover any sound which might escape from his lips half-opened by slumber. The mortals, dear to the gods for their virtue, have received from their hands lyres to give delight to man, or the seeds of new plants to make him rich; but from their inexorable lips, nothing!'

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"Such were the lessons which the old Chiron gave me. Waned to the very extremity of life, the Centaur yet nourished in his spirit the most lofty discourse.

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"For me, O Melampus, I decline into my last days, calm as the setting of the constellations. I still retain enterprise enough to climb to the top of the rocks, and there I linger late, either gazing on the wild and restless clouds, or to see come up from the horizon the rainy Hyades, the Pleiades, or the great Orion; but I feel myself perishing and passing quickly away, like a snow-wreath floating on the stream; and soon shall I be mingled with the waters which flow in the vast bosom of Earth."

IV

EUGÉNIE DE GUÉRIN

Who that had spoken of Maurice de Guérin could refrain from speaking of his sister Eugénie, the most devoted of sisters, one of the rarest and most beautiful of souls? "There is nothing fixed, no duration, no vitality in the sentiments of women towards one another; their attachments are mere pretty knots of ribbon, and no more. In all the friendships of women I observe this slightness of the tie. I know no instance to the contrary, even in history. Orestes and Pylades have no sisters." So she speaks of the friendships of her own sex. But Electra can attach herself to Orestes, if not to Chrysothemis. And to her brother Maurice, Eugénie de Guérin was Pylades and Electra in one.

The name of Maurice de Guérin,—that young man so gifted, so attractive, so careless of fame, and so early snatched away; who died at twenty-nine; who, says his sister, "let what he did be lost with a carelessness so unjust to himself, set no value on any of his own productions, and departed hence without reaping the rich harvest which seemed his due;" who, in spite of his immaturity, in spite of his fragility, exercised such a charm, "furnished to others so much of that which all live by," that some years after his death his sister found in a country-house where he used to stay, in the journal of a young girl who had not known him, but who heard her family speak of him, his name, the date of his death, and these words, "*il était leur vie*" (he was their life); whose talent, exquisite as that of Keats, with less of sunlight, abundance, and facility in it than that of Keats, but with more of distinction and power, had "that winning, delicate, and beautifully happy turn of expression" which is the stamp of the master,—is beginning to be well known to all lovers of literature. This establishment of Maurice's name was an object for which his sister Eugénie passionately laboured. While he was alive, she placed her whole joy in the flowering of this gifted nature; when he was dead, she had no other thought than to make the world know him as she knew him. She outlived him nine years, and her cherished task for those years was to rescue the fragments of her brother's composition, to collect them, to get them published. In pursuing this task she had at first cheering hopes of success; she had at last baffling and bitter disappointment. Her earthly business was at an end; she died. Ten years afterwards, it was permitted to the love of a friend, M. Trebutien, to effect for Maurice's memory what the love of a sister had failed to accomplish. But those who read, with delight and admiration, the journal and letters of Maurice de Guérin, could not but be attracted and touched by this sister Eugénie, who met them at every page. She seemed hardly less gifted, hardly less interesting, than Maurice himself. And now M. Trebutien has done for the sister what he had done for the brother. He published the journal of Mdlle. Eugénie de Guérin, and a few (too few, alas!) of her letters. The book has made a profound impression in France; and the fame which she sought only for her brother now crowns the sister also.

Parts of Mdlle. de Guérin's journal were several years ago printed for private circulation, and a writer in the *National Review* had the good fortune to fall in with them. The bees of our English criticism do not often roam so far afield for their honey, and this critic deserves thanks for having flitted in his quest of blossom to foreign parts, and for having settled upon a beautiful flower found there. He had the discernment to see that Mdlle. de Guérin was well worth speaking of, and he spoke of her with feeling and appreciation. But that, as I have said, was several years ago; even a true and feeling homage needs to be from time to time renewed, if the memory of its object is to endure; and criticism must not lose an occasion like the present, when Mdlle. de Guérin's journal is for the first time published to the world, of directing notice once more to this religious and beautiful character.

Eugénie de Guérin was born in 1805, at the château of Le Cayla, in Languedoc. Her family, though reduced in circumstances was noble; and even when one is a saint one cannot quite forget that one comes of the stock of the Guarini of Italy, or that one counts among one's ancestors a Bishop of Senlis, who had the marshalling of the French order of battle on the day of Bouvines. Le Cayla was a solitary place, with its terrace looking down upon a stream-bed and valley; "one may pass days there without seeing any living thing but the sheep, without hearing any living thing but the birds." M. de Guérin, Eugénie's father, lost his wife when Eugénie was thirteen years old, and Maurice seven; he was left with four children,—Eugénie, Marie, Erembert, and Maurice,—of whom Eugénie was the eldest, and Maurice was the youngest. This youngest child whose beauty and delicacy had made him the object of his mother's most anxious fondness, was commended by her in dying to the care of his sister Eugénie. Maurice at eleven years old went to school at Toulouse; then he went to the Collège Stanislas at Paris; then he became a member of the religious society which M. de Lamennais had formed at La Chênaie in Brittany; afterwards he lived chiefly at Paris, returning to Le Cayla, at the age of twenty-nine, to die. Distance, in those days, was a great obstacle to frequent meetings of the separated members of a French family of narrow means. Maurice de Guérin was seldom at Le Cayla after he had once quitted it, though his few visits to his home were long ones; but he passed five years,—the period of his sojourn in Brittany, and of his first settlement in Paris,—without coming home at all. In spite of the check from these absences, in spite of the more serious check from a temporary alteration in Maurice's religious feelings, the union between the brother and sister was wonderfully close and firm. For they were knit together, not only by the tie of blood and early attachment, but also by the tie of a common genius. "We were," says Eugénie, "two eyes looking out of one forehead." She, on her part, brought to her love for her brother the devotedness of a woman, the intensity of a recluse, almost the solicitude of a mother. Her home duties prevented her from following the wish which often arose in her, to join a religious sisterhood. There is a trace,—just a trace,—of an early attachment to a cousin; but he died when she was twenty-four. After that, she lived for Maurice. It was for Maurice that, in addition to her constant correspondence with him by letter, she began in 1834 her journal, which was sent to him by portions as it was finished. After his death she tried to continue it, addressing it to "Maurice in heaven." But the effort was beyond her strength; gradually the entries become rarer and rarer; and on the last day of December 1840 the pen dropped from her hand: the journal ends.

Other sisters have loved their brothers, and it is not her affection for Maurice, admirable as this was, which alone could have made Eugénie de Guérin celebrated. I have said that both brother and sister had genius: M. Sainte-Beuve goes so far as to say that the sister's genius was equal, if not superior, to her brother's. No one has a more profound respect for M. Sainte-Beuve's critical judgments than I have, but it seems to me that this particular judgment needs to be a little explained and guarded. In Maurice's special talent, which was a talent for interpreting nature, for finding words which incomparably render the subtlest impressions which nature makes upon us, which bring the intimate life of nature wonderfully near to us, it seems to me that his sister was by no means his equal. She never, indeed, expresses herself without grace and intelligence; but her words, when she speaks of the life and appearances of nature, are in general but intellectual signs; they are not like her brother's—symbols equivalent with the thing symbolised. They bring the notion of the thing described to the mind, they do not bring the feeling of it to the imagination. Writing from the Nivernais, that region of vast woodlands in the centre of France: "It does one good," says Eugénie, "to be going about in the midst of this enchanting nature, with flowers, birds, and verdure all round one. under this large and blue sky of the Nivernais. How I love the gracious form of it, and those little white clouds here and there, like cushions of cotton, hung aloft to rest the eye in this immensity!" It is pretty and graceful, but how different from the grave and pregnant strokes of Maurice's pencil! "I have been along the Loire, and seen on its banks the plains where nature is puissant and gay; I have seen royal and antique dwellings, all marked by memories which have their place in the mournful legend of humanity, —Chambord, Blois, Amboise, Chenonceaux; then the towns on the two banks of the river,—Orleans, Tours, Saumur, Nantes; and at the end of it all, the Ocean rumbling. From these I passed back into the interior of the country, as far as Bourges and Nevers, a region of vast woodlands, in which murmurs of an immense range and fulness" (*ce beau torrent de rumeurs*, as, with an expression worthy of Wordsworth, he elsewhere calls them) "prevail and never cease." Words whose charm is like that of the sounds of the murmuring forest itself, and whose reverberations, like theirs, die away in the infinite distance of the soul.

Maurice's life was in the life of nature, and the passion for it consumed him; it would have been strange if his accent had not caught more of the soul of Nature than Eugénie's accent, whose life was elsewhere. "You will find in him," Maurice says to his sister of a friend whom he was recommending to her, "you will find in him that which you love, and which suits you better than anything else,—*l'onction*, *l'effusion*, *la mysticité*." Unction, the pouring out of the soul, the rapture of the mystic, were dear to Maurice also; but in him the bent of his genius gave even to those a special direction of its own. In Eugénie they took the direction most native and familiar to them; their object was the religious life.

And yet, if one analyses this beautiful and most interesting character quite to the bottom, it is not exactly as a saint that Eugénie de Guérin is remarkable. The ideal saint is a nature like Saint François de Sales or Fénelon; a nature of ineffable sweetness and serenity, a nature in which struggle and revolt is over, and the whole man (so far as is possible to human infirmity) swallowed up in love. Saint Theresa (it is Mdlle. de Guérin herself who reminds us of it) endured twenty years of unacceptance and of repulse in her prayers; yes, but the Saint Theresa whom Christendom knows is Saint Theresa repulsed no longer! it is Saint Theresa accepted, rejoicing in love, radiant with ecstasy. Mdlle. de Guérin is not one of these saints arrived at perfect sweetness and calm, steeped in ecstasy; there is something primitive, indomitable in her, which she governs, indeed, but which chafes, which revolts; somewhere in the depths of that strong nature there is a struggle, an impatience, an inquietude, an ennui, which endures to the end, and which leaves one, when one finally closes her journal, with an impression of profound melancholy. "There are days," she writes to her brother, "when one's nature rolls itself up, and becomes a hedgehog. If I had you here at this moment, here close by me, how I should prick you! how sharp and hard!" "Poor soul, poor soul," she cries out to herself another day, "what is the matter, what would you have? Where is that which will do you good? Everything is green, everything is in bloom, all the air has a breath of flowers. How beautiful it is! well, I will go out. No, I should be alone, and all this beauty, when one is alone, is worth nothing. What shall I do then? Read, write, pray, take a basket of sand on my head like that hermit-saint, and walk with it? Yes, work, work! keep busy the body which does mischief to the soul! I have been too little occupied to-day, and that is bad for one, and it gives a certain ennui which I have in me time to ferment."

A certain ennui which I have in me: her wound is there. In vain she follows the counsel of Fénelon: "If God tires you, *tell Him that He tires you.*" No doubt she obtained great and frequent solace and restoration from prayer: "This morning I was suffering; well, at present I am calm, and this I owe to faith, simply to faith, to an act of faith. I can think of death and eternity without trouble, without alarm. Over a deep of sorrow there floats a divine calm, a suavity which is the work of God only. In vain have I tried other things at a time like this: nothing human comforts the soul, nothing human upholds it:—

'A l'enfant il faut sa mère,
A mon âme il faut mon Dieu.'"

Still the ennui reappears, bringing with it hours of unutterable forlornness, and making her cling to her one great earthly happiness,—her affection for her brother,—with an intenseness, an anxiety, a desperation in which there is something morbid, and by which she is occasionally carried into an irritability, a jealousy which she herself is the first indeed, to censure, which she severely represses, but which nevertheless leaves a sense of pain.

Mdlle. de Guérin's admirers have compared her to Pascal, and in some respects the comparison is just. But she cannot exactly be classed with Pascal, any more than with

Saint François de Sales. Pascal is a man, and the inexhaustible power and activity of his mind leave him no leisure for ennui. He has not the sweetness and serenity of the perfect saint; he is, perhaps, "der strenge, kranke Pascal—*the severe, morbid Pascal,*"—as Goethe (and, strange to say, Goethe at twenty-three, an age which usually feels Pascal's charm most profoundly) calls him; but the stress and movement of the lifelong conflict waged in him between his soul and his reason keep him full of fire, full of agitation, and keep his reader, who witnesses this conflict, animated and excited; the sense of forlornness and dejected weariness which clings to Eugénie de Guérin does not belong to Pascal. Eugénie de Guérin is a woman, and longs for a state of firm happiness, for an affection in which she may repose; the inward bliss of Saint Theresa or Fénelon would have satisfied her; denied this, she cannot rest satisfied with the triumphs of self-abasement, with the sombre joy of trampling the pride of life and of reason underfoot, of reducing all human hope and joy to insignificance; she repeats the magnificent words of Bossuet, words which both Catholicism and Protestantism have uttered with indefatigable iteration: "On trouve au fond de tout le vide et le néant—*at the bottom of everything one finds emptiness and nothingness,*" but she feels, as every one but the true mystic must ever feel, their incurable sterility.

She resembles Pascal, however, by the clearness and firmness of her intelligence, going straight and instinctively to the bottom of any matter she is dealing with, and expressing herself about it with incomparable precision; never fumbling with what she has to say, never imperfectly seizing or imperfectly presenting her thought. And to this admirable precision she joins a lightness of touch, a feminine ease and grace, a flowing facility which are her own. "I do not say," writes her brother Maurice, an excellent judge, "that I find in myself a dearth of expression; but I have not this abundance of yours, this productiveness of soul which streams forth, which courses along without ever failing, and always with an infinite charm." And writing to her of some composition of hers, produced after her religious scruples had for a long time kept her from the exercise of her talent: "You see, my dear Tortoise," he writes, "that your talent is no illusion, since after a period, I know not how long, of poetical inaction,—a trial to which any half-talent would have succumbed,—it rears its head again more vigorous than ever. It is really heart-breaking to see you repress and bind down, with I know not what scruples, your spirit, which tends with all the force of its nature to develop itself in this direction. Others have made it a case of conscience for you to resist this impulse, and I make it one for you to follow it." And she says of herself, on one of her freer days: "It is the instinct of my life to write, as it is the instinct of the fountain to flow." The charm of her expression is not a sensuous and imaginative charm like that of Maurice, but rather an intellectual charm; it comes from the texture of the style rather than from its elements; it is not so much in the words as in the turn of the phrase, in the happy cast and flow of the sentence. Recluse as she was, she had a great correspondence: every one wished to have letters from her; and no wonder.

To this strength of intelligence and talent of expression she joined a great force of character. Religion had early possessed itself of this force of character, and reinforced it: in the shadow of the Cevennes, in the sharp and tonic nature of this region of Southern France, which has seen the Albigensians, which has seen the Camisards, Catholicism too is fervent and intense. Eugénie de Guérin was brought up amidst strong religious influences, and they found in her a nature on which they could lay firm hold. I have said that she was not a saint of the order of Saint François de Sales or Fénelon; perhaps she had too keen an intelligence to suffer her to be this, too forcible and impetuous a character. But I did not mean to imply the least doubt of the reality, the profoundness, of her religious life. She was penetrated by the power of religion; religion was the master-influence of her life; she derived immense consolations from religion, she earnestly strove to conform her whole nature to it; if there was an element in her which religion could not perfectly reach, perfectly transmute, she groaned over this element in her, she chid it, she made it bow. Almost every thought in her was brought into harmony with religion; and what few thoughts were not thus brought into harmony were brought into subjection.

Then she had her affection for her brother; and this, too, though perhaps there might be in it something a little over-eager, a little too absolute, a little too susceptible, was a pure, a devoted affection. It was not only passionate, it was tender. It was tender, pliant, and self-sacrificing to a degree that not in one nature out of a thousand,—of natures with a mind and will like hers,—is found attainable. She thus united extraordinary power of intelligence, extraordinary force of character, and extraordinary strength of affection; and all these under the control of a deep religious feeling.

This is what makes her so remarkable, so interesting. I shall try and make her speak for herself, that she may show us the characteristic sides of her rare nature with her own inimitable touch.

It must be remembered that her journal is written for Maurice only; in her lifetime no eye but his ever saw it. "*Ceci n'est pas pour le public,*" she writes; "*c'est de l'intime, c'est de l'âme, c'est pour un.*" "This is not for the public; it contains my inmost thoughts, my very soul; it is for *one.*" And Maurice, this *one*, was a kind of second self to her. "We see things with the same eyes; what you find beautiful, I find beautiful; God has made our souls of one piece." And this genuine confidence in her brother's sympathy gives to the entries in her journal a naturalness and simple freedom rare in such compositions. She felt that he would understand her, and be interested in all that she wrote.

One of the first pages of her journal relates an incident of the home-life of Le Cayla, the smallest detail of which Maurice liked to hear; and in relating it she brings this simple life before us. She is writing in November 1834:—

"I am furious with the gray cat. The mischievous beast has made away with a little half-frozen pigeon, which I was trying to thaw by the side of the fire. The poor little thing was just beginning to come round; I meant to tame him; he would have grown fond of me; and there is my whole scheme eaten up by a cat! This event, and all the rest of to-day's history, has passed in the kitchen. Here I take up my abode all the morning and a part of the evening, ever since I am without Mimi.[1] I have to superintend the cook; sometimes papa comes down, and I read to him by the oven, or by the fireside, some bits out of the *Anti-*

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[1] The familiar name of her sister Marie.

quities of the Anglo-Saxon Church. This book struck Pierril[1] with astonishment. '*Que de mouts aqui dédins!* What a lot of words there are inside it!' This boy is a real original. One evening he asked me if the soul was immortal; then afterwards, what a philosopher was? We had got upon great questions, as you see. When I told him that a philosopher was a person who was wise and learned: 'Then, mademoiselle, you are a philosopher.' This was said with an air of simplicity and sincerity which might have made even Socrates take it as a compliment; but it made me laugh so much that my gravity as catechist was gone for that evening. A day or two ago Pierril left us, to his great sorrow: his time with us was up on Saint Brice's day. Now he goes about with his little dog, truffle-hunting. If he comes this way I shall go and ask him if he still thinks I look like a philosopher."

Her good sense and spirit made her discharge with alacrity her household tasks in this patriarchal life of Le Cayla, and treat them as the most natural thing in the world. She sometimes complains, to be sure, of burning her fingers at the kitchen-fire. But when a literary friend of her brother expresses enthusiasm about her and her poetical nature: "The poetess," she says, "whom this gentleman believes me to be, is an ideal being, infinitely removed from the life which is actually mine—a life of occupations, a life of household business, which takes up all my time. How could I make it otherwise? I am sure I do not know; and, besides, my duty is in this sort of life, and I have no wish to escape from it."

Among these occupations of the patriarchal life of the châtelaine of Le Cayla intercourse with the poor fills a prominent place:—

"To-day," she writes on the 9th of December 1834, "I have been warming myself at every fireside in the village. It is a round which Mimi and I often make, and in which I take pleasure. To-day we have been seeing sick people, and holding forth on doses and sick-room drinks. 'Take this, do that;' and they attend to us just as if we were the doctor. We prescribed shoes for a little thing who was amiss from having gone barefoot; to the brother, who, with a bad headache, was lying quite flat, we prescribed a pillow;

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[1] A servant-boy at Le Cayla.

the pillow did him good, but I am afraid it will hardly cure him. He is at the beginning of a bad feverish cold: and these poor people live in the filth of their hovels like animals in their stable; the bad air poisons them. When I come home to Le Cayla I seem to be in a palace."

She had books, too; not in abundance, not for the fancying them; the list of her library is small, and it is enlarged slowly and with difficulty. The *Letters of Saint Theresa*, which she had long wished to get, she sees in the hands of a poor servant girl, before she can procure them for herself. "What then?" is her comment: "very likely she makes a better use of them than I could," but she has the *Imitation*, the *Spiritual Works* of Bossuet and Fénelon, the *Lives of the Saints*, Corneille, Racine, André Chénier, and Lamartine; Madame de Staël's book on Germany, and French translations of Shakspeare's plays, Ossian, the *Vicar of Wakefield*, Scott's *Old Mortality* and *Redgauntlet*, and the *Promessi Sposi* of Manzoni. Above all, she has her own mind; her meditations in the lonely fields, on the oak-grown hill-side of "The Seven Springs;" her meditations and writing in her own room, her *chambrette*, her *délicieux chez moi*, where every night, before she goes to bed, she opens the window to look out upon the sky,—the balmy moonlit sky of Languedoc. This life of reading, thinking, and writing was the life she liked best, the life that most truly suited her, "I find writing has become almost a necessity to me. Whence does it arise, this impulse to give utterance to the voice of one's spirit to pour out my thoughts before God and one human being? I say one human being, because I always imagine that you are present, that you see what I write. In the stillness of a life like this my spirit is happy, and, as it were, dead to all that goes on upstairs or downstairs, in the house or out of the house. But this does not last long. 'Come, my poor spirit,' I then say to myself, 'we must go back to the things of this world.' And I take my spinning, or a book, or a saucepan, or I play with Wolf or Trilby. Such a life as this I call heaven upon earth."

Tastes like these, joined with a talent like Mdlle. de Guérin's, naturally inspire thoughts of literary composition. Such thoughts she had, and perhaps she would have been happier if she had followed them; but she never could satisfy herself that to follow them was quite consistent with the religious life, and her projects of composition were gradually relinquished:—

"Would to God that my thoughts, my spirit, had never taken their flight beyond the narrow round in which it is my lot to live! In spite of all that people say to the contrary, I feel that I cannot go beyond my needlework and my spinning without going too far: I feel it, I believe it: well, then, I will keep in my proper sphere; however much I am tempted, my spirit shall not be allowed to occupy itself with great matters until it occupies itself with them in Heaven."

And again:—

"My journal has been untouched for a long while. Do you want to know why? It is because the time seems to me misspent which I spend in writing it. We owe God an account of every minute; and is it not a wrong use of our minutes to employ them in writing a history of our transitory days?"

She overcomes her scruples, and goes on writing the journal; but again and again they return to her. Her brother tells her of the pleasure and comfort something she has written gives to a friend of his in affliction. She answers:—

"It is from the Cross that those thoughts come, which your friend finds so soothing, so unspeakably tender. None of them come from me. I feel my own aridity; but I feel, too, that God, when He will, can make an ocean flow upon this bed of sand. It is the same with so many simple souls, from which proceed the most admirable things; because they are in direct relation with God, without false science and without pride. And thus I am gradually losing my taste for books; I say to myself: 'What can they teach me which I shall not one day know in Heaven? let God be my master and my study here!' I try to make Him so, and I find myself the better for it. I read little; I go out little; I plunge myself in the inward life. How infinite are the sayings, doings, feelings, events of that life! Oh, if you could but see them! But what avails it to make them known? God alone should be admitted to the sanctuary of the soul."

Beautifully as she says all this, one cannot, I think, read it without a sense of disquietude, without a presentiment that this ardent spirit is forcing itself from its natural bent, that the beatitude of the true mystic will never be its earthly portion. And yet how simple and charming is her picture of the life of religion which she chose as her ark of refuge, and in which she desired to place all her happiness :—

"Cloaks, clogs, umbrellas, all the apparatus of winter, went with us this morning to Andillac, where we have passed the whole day; some of it at the curé's house, the rest in church. How I like this life of a country Sunday, with its activity, its journeys to church, its liveliness! You find all your neighbours on the road; you have a curtsey from every woman you meet, and then, as you go along, such a talk about the poultry, the sheep and cows, the good man and the children! My great delight is to give a kiss to these children, and see them run away and hide their blushing faces in their mother's gown. They are alarmed at *las doumaïsélos*,[1] as at a being of another world. One of these little things said the other day to its grandmother, who was talking of coming to see us: '*Minino*, you mustn't go to that castle; there is a black hole there.' What is the reason that in all ages the noble's château has been an object of terror? Is it because of the horrors that were committed there in old times? I suppose so."

This vague horror of the château, still lingering in the mind of the French peasant fifty years after he has stormed it, is indeed curious, and is one of the thousand indications how unlike aristocracy on the Continent has been to aristocracy in England. But this is one of the great matters with which Mdlle. de Guérin would not have us occupied; let us pass to the subject of Christmas in Languedoc :—

"Christmas is come; the beautiful festival, the one I love most, and which gives me the same joy as it gave the shepherds of Bethlehem. In real truth, one's whole soul sings with joy at this beautiful coming of God upon earth,—a coming which here is announced on all sides of us by music and by our charming *nadalet*.[2] Nothing at Paris can give you a notion of what Christmas is with us. You have not even the midnight-mass. We all of us went to it, papa at our head, on the most perfect night possible. Never was there a finer sky than ours was that midnight;—so fine that papa kept perpetually throwing back the hood of his cloak, that he might look up at the sky. The ground was white with hoar-frost, but we were not cold; besides, the air, as we met it, was warmed by the bundles of blazing torchwood which our servants carried in front of us to light us on our way. It was delightful, I do assure you; and I should like you to have seen us there on our road to church, in those lanes with the bushes along their backs as white as if they were in flower. The hoar-frost makes the most lovely flowers. We saw a long spray so beautiful that we wanted to take it with us as a garland for the communion-table, but it melted in our hands: all flowers fade so soon! I was very sorry about my garland; it was mournful to see it drip away, and get smaller and smaller every minute."

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[1] The young lady.

[2] A peculiar peal rung at Christmas-time by the church bells of Languedoc.

The religious life is at bottom everywhere alike; but it is curious to note the variousness of its setting and outward circumstance. Catholicism has these so different from Protestantism! and in Catholicism these accessories have, it cannot be denied, a nobleness and amplitude which in Protestantism is often wanting to them. In Catholicism they have, from the antiquity of this form of religion, from its pretensions to universality, from its really widespread prevalence, from its sensuousness, something European, august, and imaginative: in Protestantism they often have, from its inferiority in all these respects, something provincial, mean, and prosaic. In revenge, Protestantism has a future before it, a prospect of growth in alliance with the vital movement of modern society; while Catholicism appears to be bent on widening the breach between itself and the modern spirit, to be fatally losing itself in the multiplication of dogmas, Mariolatry, and miracle-mongering. But the style and circumstance of actual Catholicism is grander than its present tendency, and the style and circumstance of Protestantism is meaner than its tendency. While I was reading the journal of Mdlle. de Guérin there came into my hands the memoir and poems of a young Englishwoman, Miss Emma Tatham; and one could not but be struck with the singular contrast which the two lives in their setting rather than in their inherent quality, present. Miss Tatham had not, certainly, Mdlle. de Guérin's talent, but she had a sincere vein of poetic feeling, a genuine aptitude for composition. Both were fervent Christians, and, so far, the two lives had a real resemblance; but, in the setting of them, what a difference! The Frenchwoman is a Catholic in Languedoc; the Englishwoman is a Protestant at Margate; Margate, that brick-and-mortar image of English Protestantism, representing it in all its prose, all its uncomeliness,—let me add, all its salubrity. Between the external form and fashion of these two lives, between the Catholic Mdlle. de Guérin's *nadalet* at the Languedoc Christmas, her chapel of moss at Easter-time, her daily reading of the life of a saint, carrying her to the most diverse times, places, and peoples,—her quoting, when she wants to fix her mind upon the staunchness which the religious aspirant needs, the words of Saint Macedonius to a hunter whom he met in the mountains, "I pursue after God, as you pursue after game,"—her quoting, when she wants to break a village girl of disobedience to her mother, the story of the ten disobedient children whom at Hippo Saint Augustine saw palsied;—between all this and the bare, blank, narrowly English setting of Miss Tatham's Protestantism, her "union in church-fellowship with the worshippers at Hawley Square Chapel, Margate;" her "singing with soft, sweet voice, the animating lines—

"'My Jesus to know, and feel His blood flow,
'Tis life everlasting, 'tis heaven below;'"

her "young female teachers belonging to the Sunday-school," and her "Mr Thomas Rowe, a venerable class-leader,"—what a dissimilarity! In the ground of the two lives, a likeness; in all their circumstance, what unlikeness! An unlikeness, it will be said, in that which is non-essential and indifferent. Non-essential,—yes; indifferent,—no. The signal want of grace and charm in English Protestantism's setting of its religious life is not an indifferent matter; it is a real weakness. *This ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone.*

I have said that the present tendency of Catholicism,—the Catholicism of the main body of the Catholic clergy and laity,—seems likely to exaggerate rather than to remove all that in this form of religion is most repugnant to reason; but this Catholicism was not that of Mdlle. de Guérin. The insufficiency of her Catholicism comes from a doctrine which Protestantism, too, has adopted, although Protestantism, from its inherent element of freedom, may find it easier to escape from it; a doctrine with a certain attraction for all noble natures, but, in the modern world at any rate, incurably sterile,—the doctrine of the emptiness and nothingness of human life, of the superiority of renouncement to activity, of quietism to energy; the doctrine which makes effort for things on this side of the grave a folly, and joy in things on this side of the grave a sin. But her Catholicism is remarkably free from the faults which Protestants commonly think inseparable from Catholicism; the relation to the priest, the practice of confession, assume, when she speaks of them, an aspect which is not that under which Exeter Hall knows them, but which,—unless one is of the number of those who prefer regarding that by which men and nations die to regarding that by which they live,—one is glad to study. "*La confession,*" she says twice in her journal, "*n'est qu'une expansion du repentir dans l'amour;*" and her weekly journey to the confessional in the little church of Cahuzac is her "*cher pélerinage;*" the little church is the place where she has "*laissé tant de misères.*"

"This morning," she writes one 28th of November, "I was up before daylight, dressed quickly, said my prayers, and started with Marie for Cahuzac. When we got there, the chapel was occupied, which I was not sorry for. I like not to be hurried, and to have time, before I go in, to lay bare my whole soul before God. This often takes me a long time, because my thoughts are apt to be flying about like these autumn leaves. At ten o'clock I was on my knees, listening to words the most salutary that were ever spoken; and I went away, feeling myself a better being. Every burden thrown off leaves us with a sense of brightness; and when the soul has laid down the load of its sins at God's feet, it feels as if it had wings. What an admirable thing is confession! What comfort, what light, what strength is given me every time after I have said, *I have sinned.*"

This blessing of confession is the greater, she says, "the more the heart of the priest to whom we confide our repentance is like that divine heart which 'has so loved us.' This is what attaches me to M. Bories." M. Bories was the curé of her parish, a man no longer young, and of whose loss, when he was about to leave them, she thus speaks:—

"What a grief for me? how much I lose in losing this faithful guide of my conscience, heart, and mind, of my whole self, which God has appointed to be in his charge, and which let itself be in his charge so gladly! He knew the resolves which God had put in my heart, and I had need of his help to follow them. Our new curé cannot supply his place: he is so young! and then he seems so inexperienced, so undecided! It needs firmness to pluck a soul out of the midst of the world, and to uphold it against the assaults of flesh and blood. It is Saturday, my day for going to Cahuzac; I am just going there, perhaps I shall come back more tranquil. God has always given me some good thing there, in that chapel where I have left behind me so many miseries."

Such is confession for her when the priest is worthy: and, when he is not worthy, she knows how to separate the man from the office:—

"To-day I am going to do something which I dislike; but I will do it, with God's help. Do not think I am on my way to the stake; it is only that I am going to confess to a priest in whom I have not confidence, but who is the only one here. In this act of religion the man must always be separated from the priest, and sometimes the man must be annihilated."

The same clear sense, the same freedom from superstition shows itself in all her religious life. She tells us, to be sure, how once, when she was a little girl, she stained a new frock, and on praying, in her alarm, to an image of the Virgin which hung in her room, saw the stains vanish: even the austerest Protestant will not judge such Mariolatry as this very harshly. But, in general, the Virgin Mary fills, in the religious parts of her journal, no prominent place; it is Jesus, not Mary. "Oh, how well has Jesus said: 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden.' It is only there, only in the bosom of God, that we can rightly weep, rightly rid ourselves of our burden." And again; "The mystery of suffering makes one grasp the belief of something to be expiated, something to be won. I see it in Jesus Christ, the Man of Sorrow. *It was necessary that the Son of Man should suffer.* That is all we know in the troubles and calamities of life."

And who has ever spoken of justification more impressively and piously than Mdlle. de Guérin speaks of it, when, after reckoning the number of minutes she has lived, she exclaims:—

"My God, what have we done with all these minutes of ours, which Thou, too, wilt one day reckon? Will there be any of them to count for eternal life? will there be many of them? will there be one of them? 'If thou, O Lord, will be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it!' This close scrutiny of our time may well make us tremble, all of us who have advanced more than a few steps in life; for God will judge us otherwise than as he judges the lilies of the field. I have never been able to understand the security of those who placed their whole reliance, in presenting themselves before God, upon a good conduct in the ordinary relations of human life. As if all our duties were confined within the narrow sphere of this world! To be a good parent, a good child, a good citizen, a good brother or sister, is not enough to procure entrance into the kingdom of heaven. God demands other things besides these kindly social virtues of him whom he means to crown with an eternity of glory."

And, with this zeal for the spirit and power of religion, what prudence in her counsels of religious practice; what discernment, what measure! She has been speaking of the charm of the *Lives of the Saints*, and she goes on:—

"Notwithstanding this, the *Lives of the Saints* seem to me, for a great many people, dangerous reading. I would not recommend them to a young girl, or even to some women who are no longer young. What one reads has such power over one's feelings; and these, even in seeking God, sometimes go astray. Alas, we have seen it in poor C.'s case. What care one ought to take with a young person; with what she reads, what she writes, her society, her prayers,—all of them matters which demand a mother's tender watchfulness! I remember many things I did at fourteen, which my mother, had she lived, would not have let me do. I would have done anything for God's sake; I would have cast myself into an oven, and assuredly things like that are not God's will; He is not pleased by the hurt one does to one's health through that ardent but ill-regulated piety which, while it impairs the body, often leaves many a fault flourishing. And, therefore, Saint François de Sales used to say to the nuns who asked his leave to go bare-foot: 'Change your brains and keep your shoes.'"

Meanwhile Maurice, in a five years' absence, and amid the distractions of Paris, lost, or seemed to his sister to lose, something of his fondness for his home and its inmates: he certainly lost his early religious habits and feelings. It is on this latter loss that Mdlle. de Guérin's journal oftenest touches,—with infinite delicacy, but with infinite anguish:—

"Oh, the agony of being in fear for a soul's salvation, who can describe it! That which caused our Saviour the keenest suffering, in the agony of his Passion, was not so much the thought of the torments he was to endure, as the thought that these torments would be of no avail for a multitude of sinners; for all those who set themselves against their redemption, or who do not care for it. The mere anticipation of this obstinacy and this heedlessness had power to make sorrowful, even unto death, the divine Son of Man. And this feeling all Christian souls, according to the measure of faith and love granted them, more or less share."

Maurice returned to Le Cayla in the summer of 1837, and passed six months there. This meeting entirely restored the union between him and his family. "These six months with us," writes his sister, "he ill, and finding himself so loved by us all, had entirely reattached him to us. Five years without seeing us, had perhaps made him a little lose sight of our affection for him; having found it again, he met it with all the strength of his own. He had so firmly renewed, before he left us, all family-ties, that nothing but death could have broken them." The separation in religious matters between the brother and sister gradually diminished, and before Maurice died it had ceased. I have elsewhere spoken of Maurice's religious feeling and his character. It is probable that his divergence from his sister in this sphere of religion was never so wide as she feared, and that his re-union with her was never so complete as she hoped. "His errors were passed," she says, "his illusions were cleared away; by the call of his nature, by original disposition, he had come back to sentiments of order. I knew all, I followed each of his steps; out of the fiery sphere of the passions (which held him but a little moment) I saw him pass into the sphere of the Christian life. It was a beautiful soul, the soul of Maurice." But the illness which had caused his return to Le Cayla reappeared after he got back to Paris in the winter of 1837-8. Again he seemed to recover; and his marriage with a young Creole lady, Mdlle. Caroline de Gervain, took place in the autumn of 1838. At the end of September in that year Mdlle. de Guérin had joined her brother in Paris; she was present at his marriage, and stayed with him and his wife for some months afterwards. Her journal recommences in April 1839; zealously as she had promoted her brother's marriage, cordial as were her relations with her sister-in-law, it is evident that a sense of loss, of loneliness, invades her, and sometimes weighs her down. She writes in her journal on the 4th of May:—

"God knows when we shall see one another again! My own Maurice, must it be our lot to live apart, to find that this marriage which I had so much share in bringing about, which I hoped would keep us so much together, leaves us more asunder than ever? For the present and for the future, this troubles me more than I can say. My sympathies, my inclinations, carry me more towards you than towards any other member of our family. I have the misfortune to be fonder of you than of anything else in the world, and my heart had from of old built in you its happiness. Youth gone and life declining, I looked forward to quitting the scene with Maurice. At any time of life a great affection is a great happiness; the spirit comes to take refuge in it entirely. O delight and joy which will never be your sister's portion! Only in the direction of God shall I find an issue for my heart to love as it has the notion of loving, as it has the power of loving."

From such complainings, in which there is undoubtedly something morbid,—complainings which she herself blamed, to which she seldom gave way, but which, in presenting her character, it is not just to put wholly out of sight,—she was called by the news of an alarming return of her brother's illness. For some days the entries in the journal show her agony of apprehension. "He coughs, he coughs still! Those words keep echoing for ever in my ears, and pursue me wherever I go; I cannot look at the leaves on the trees without thinking that the winter will come, and then the consumptive die." Then she went to him and brought him back by slow stages to Le Cayla, dying. He died on the 19th of July 1839.

Thenceforward the energy of life ebbed in her; but the main chords of her being, the chord of affection, the chord of religious longing, the chord of intelligence, the chord of sorrow, gave, so long as they answered to the touch at all, a deeper and finer sound than ever. Always she saw before her, "that beloved pale face;" "that beautiful head, with all its different expressions, smiling, speaking, suffering, dying," regarded her always:—

"I have seen his coffin in the same room, in the same spot where I remember seeing, when I was a very little girl, his cradle, when I was brought home from Gaillac, where I was then staying, for his christening. This christening was a grand one, full of rejoicing, more than that of any of the rest of us; specially marked. I enjoyed myself greatly, and went back to Gaillac next day, charmed with my new little brother. Two years afterwards I came home, and brought with me a frock for him of my own making. I dressed him in the frock, and took him out with me along by the warren at the north of the house, and there he walked a few steps alone,—his first walking alone,—and I ran with delight to tell my mother the news: 'Maurice, Maurice has begun to walk by himself!'—Recollections which, coming back to-day, break one's heart."

The shortness and suffering of her brother's life filled her with an agony of pity. "Poor beloved soul, you have had hardly any happiness here below; your life has been so short, your repose so rare. O God, uphold me, establish my heart in thy faith! Alas, I have too little of this supporting me! How we have gazed at him, and loved him, and kissed him,—his wife, and we, his sisters; he lying lifeless in his bed, his head on the pillow as if he were asleep! Then we followed him to the churchyard, to the grave, to his last resting-place, and prayed over him, and wept over him; and we are here again, and I am writing to him again, as if he were staying away from home, as if he were in Paris. My beloved one, can it be, shall we never see one another again on earth?"

But in heaven?—and here, though love and hope finally prevailed, the very passion of the sister's longing sometimes inspired torturing inquietudes:—

"I am broken down with misery. I want to see him. Every moment I pray to God to grant me this grace. Heaven, the world of spirits, is it so far from us? O depth, O mystery of the other life which separates us! I, who was so eagerly anxious about him, who wanted so to know all that happened to him,—wherever he may be now, it is over! I follow him into the three abodes; I stop wistfully before the place of bliss, I pass on to the place of suffering,—to the gulf of fire. My God, my God, no! Not there let my brother be! not there! And he is not: his soul, the soul of Maurice, among the lost . . . horrible fear, no! But in purgatory, where the soul is cleansed by suffering, where the failings of the heart are expiated, the doubtings of the spirit, the half-yieldings to evil? Perhaps my brother is there and suffers, and calls to us amidst his anguish of repentance, as he used to call to us amidst his bodily suffering: 'Help me, you who love me.' Yes, beloved one, by prayer. I will go and pray; prayer has been such a power to me, and I will pray to the end. Prayer! Oh! and prayer for the dead; it is the dew of purgatory."

Often, alas, the gracious dew would not fall; the air of her soul was parched; the arid wind, which was somewhere in the depths of her being, blew. She marks in her journal the 1st of May, "this return of the loveliest month in the year," only to keep up the old habit; even the month of May can no longer give her any pleasure: "*Tout est changé*—all is changed." She is crushed by "the misery which has nothing good in it, the tearless, dry misery, which bruises the heart like a hammer."

"I am dying to everything. I am dying of a slow moral agony, a condition of unutterable suffering. Lie there, my poor journal! be forgotten with all this world which is fading away from me. I will write here no more until I come to life again, until God re-awakens me out of this tomb in which my soul lies buried. Maurice, my beloved!

it was not thus with me when I had *you!* The thought of Maurice could revive me from the most profound depression: to have him in the world was enough for me. With Maurice, to be buried alive would have not seemed dull to me."

And, as a burden to this funereal strain, the old *vide et néant* of Bossuet, profound, solemn, sterile:—

"So beautiful in the morning, and in the evening, *that!* how the thought disenchants one, and turns one from the world! I can understand that Spanish grandee who, after lifting up the winding-sheet of a beautiful queen, threw himself into the cloister and became a great saint. I would have all my friends at La Trappe, in the interest of their eternal welfare. Not that in the world one cannot be saved, not that there are not in the world duties to be discharged as sacred and as beautiful as there are in the cloister but . . . ."

And there she stops, and a day or two afterwards her journal comes to an end. A few fragments, a few letters carry us on a little later, but after the 22nd of August 1845 there is nothing. To make known her brother's genius to the world was the one task she set herself after his death; in 1840 came Madame Sand's noble tribute to him in the *Revue des Deux Mondes;* then followed projects of raising a yet more enduring monument to his fame, by collecting and publishing his scattered compositions; these projects I have already said, were baffled;—Mdlle. de Guérin's letter of the 22nd of August 1845 relates to this disappointment. In silence, during nearly three years more, she faded away at Le Cayla. She died on the 31st of May 1848.

M. Trebutien has accomplished the pious task in which Mdlle. de Guérin was baffled, and has established Maurice's fame; by publishing this journal he has established Eugénie's also. She was very different from her brother; but she too, like him, had that in her which preserves a reputation. Her soul had the same characteristic quality as his talent,—*distinction.* Of this quality the world is impatient; it chafes against it, rails at it, insults it, hates it;—it ends by receiving its influence, and by undergoing its law. This quality at last inexorably corrects the world's blunders, and fixes the world's ideals. It procures that the popular poet shall not finally pass for a Pindar, nor the popular historian for a

Tacitus, nor the popular preacher for a Bossuet. To the circle of spirits marked by this rare quality, Maurice and Eugénie de Guérin belong; they will take their place in the sky which these inhabit, and shine close to one another *lucida sidera.*

V

HEINRICH HEINE

"I KNOW not if I deserve that a laurel-wreath should one day be laid on my coffin. Poetry, dearly as I have loved it, has always been to me but a divine plaything. I have never attached any great value to poetical fame; and I trouble myself very little whether people praise my verses or blame them. But lay on my coffin a *sword;* for I was a brave soldier in the war of liberation of humanity."

Heine had his full share of love of fame, and cared quite as much as his brethren of the *genus irritabile* whether people praised his verses or blamed them. And he was very little of a hero. Posterity will certainly decorate his tomb with the emblem of the laurel rather than with the emblem of the sword. Still, for his contemporaries, for us, for the Europe of the present century, he is significant chiefly for the reason which he himself in the words just quoted assigns. He is significant because he was, if not pre-eminently a brave, yet a brilliant, a most effective soldier in the war of liberation of humanity.

To ascertain the master-current in the literature of an epoch, and to distinguish this from all minor currents, is the critic's highest functions; in discharging it he shows how far he possesses the most indispensable quality of his office,—justness of spirit. The living writer who has done most to make England acquainted with German authors, a man of genius, but to whom precisely this one quality of justness of spirit is perhaps wanting,—I mean Mr Carlyle,—seems to me in the result of his labours on German literature to afford a proof how very necessary to the critic this quality is. Mr Carlyle has spoken admirably of Goethe; but then Goethe stands before all men's eyes, the manifest centre of German literature; and from this central source many rivers flow. Which of these rivers is the main stream?

which of the courses of spirit which we see active in Goethe is the course which will most influence the future, and attract and be continued by the most powerful of Goethe's successors?—that is the question. Mr Carlyle attaches, it seems to me, far too much importance to the romantic school of Germany,—Tieck, Novalis, Jean Paul Richter,—and gives to these writers, really gifted as two, at any rate, of them are, an undue prominence. These writers, and others with aims and a general tendency the same as theirs, are not the real inheritors and continuators of Goethe's power; the current of their activity is not the main current of German literature after Goethe. Far more in Heine's works flows this main current; Heine, far more than Tieck or Jean Paul Richter, is the continuator of that which, in Goethe's varied activity, is the most powerful and vital; on Heine, of all German authors who survived Goethe, incomparably the largest portion of Goethe's mantle fell. I do not forget that when Mr Carlyle was dealing with German literature, Heine, though he was clearly risen above the horizon, had not shone forth with all his strength; I do not forget, too, that after ten or twenty years many things may come out plain before the critic which before were hard to be discerned by him; and assuredly no one would dream of imputing it as a fault to Mr Carlyle that twenty years ago he mistook the central current in German literature, overlooked the rising Heine, and attached undue importance to that romantic school which Heine was to destroy; one may rather note it as a misfortune, sent perhaps as a delicate chastisement to a critic, who,—man of genius as he is, and no one recognises his genius more admirably than I do,—has, for the functions of the critic, a little too much of the self-will and eccentricity of a genuine son of Great Britain.

Heine is noteworthy, because he is the most important German successor and continuator of Goethe in Goethe's most important line of activity. And which of Goethe's lines of activity is this?—His line of activity as "a soldier in the war of liberation of humanity."

Heine himself would hardly have admitted this affiliation, though he was far too powerful-minded a man to decry, with some of the vulgar German liberals, Goethe's genius. "The wind of the Paris Revolution," he writes after the three days of 1830, "blew about the candles a little in the dark night of Germany, so that the red curtains of a German throne or two caught fire; but the old watchmen, who do the police of the German kingdoms, are already bringing out the fire engines, and will keep the candles closer snuffed for the future. Poor, fast-bound German people, lose not all heart in thy bonds! The fashionable coating of ice melts off from my heart, my soul quivers and my eyes burn, and that is a disadvantageous state of things for a writer, who should control his subject-matter and keep himself beautifully objective, as the artistic school would have us, and as Goethe has done; he has come to be eighty years old doing this, and minister, and in good condition:—poor German people! that is thy greatest man!"

But hear Goethe himself: "If I were to say what I had really been to the Germans in general, and to the young German poets in particular, I should say I had been their *Liberator*."

Modern times find themselves with an immense system of institutions, established facts, accredited dogmas, customs, rules, which have come to them from times not modern. In this system their life has to be carried forward; yet they have a sense that this system is not of their own creation, that it by no means corresponds exactly with the wants of their actual life, that, for them, it is customary, not rational. The awakening of this sense is the awakening of the modern spirit. The modern spirit is now awake almost everywhere; the sense of want of correspondence between the forms of modern Europe and its spirit, between the new wine of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the old bottles of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, or even of the sixteenth and seventeenth, almost every one now perceives; it is no longer dangerous to affirm that this want of correspondence exists; people are even beginning to be shy of denying it. To remove this want of correspondence is beginning to be the settled endeavour of most persons of good sense. Dissolvents of the old European system of dominant ideas and facts we must all be, all of us who have any power of working; what we have to study is that we may not be acrid dissolvents of it.

And how did Goethe, that grand dissolvent in an age when there were fewer of them than at present, proceed in his task of dissolution, of liberation of the modern European from the old routine? He shall tell us himself. "Through me the German poets have become aware that, as man must live from within outwards, so the artist must work from within outwards, seeing that, make what contortions he will, he can only bring to light his own individuality. I can clearly mark where this influence of mine has made itself felt; there arises out of it a kind of poetry of Nature, and only in this way is it possible to be original."

My voice shall never be joined to those which decry Goethe, and if it is said that the foregoing is a lame and impotent conclusion to Goethe's declaration that he had been the liberator of the Germans in general, and of the young German poets in particular, I say it is not. Goethe's profound, imperturbable naturalism is absolutely fatal to all routine thinking; he puts the standard, once for all, inside every man instead of outside him; when he is told, such a thing must be so, there is immense authority and custom in favour of its being so, it has been held to be so for a thousand years, he answers with Olympian politeness, "But *is* it so? is it so to *me?*" Nothing could be more really subversive of the foundations on which the old European order rested; and it may be remarked that no persons are so radically detached from this order, no persons so thoroughly modern, as those who have felt Goethe's influence most deeply. If it is said that Goethe professes to have in this way deeply influenced but a few persons, and those persons poets, one may answer that he could have taken no better way to secure, in the end, the ear of the world; for poetry is simply the most beautiful, impressive, and widely effective mode of saying things, and hence its importance. Nevertheless the process of liberation, as Goethe worked it, though sure, is undoubtedly slow; he came, as Heine says, to be eighty years old in thus working it, and at the end of that time the old Middle-Age machine was still creaking on, the thirty German courts and their chamberlains subsisted in all their glory; Goethe himself was a minister, and the visible triumph of the modern spirit over prescription and routine seemed as far off as ever. It was the year 1830; the German sovereigns had passed the preceding fifteen years in breaking the promises of freedom they had made to their subjects when they wanted their help in the final struggle with Napoleon. Great events were happening in France; the revolution, defeated in 1815, had arisen from its defeat, and was wresting from its adversaries the power. Heinrich Heine, a young man of genius, born at Hamburg,[1] and with all the culture of Germany, but by race a Jew; with warm sympathies for France, whose revolution had given to his race the rights of citizenship, and whose rule had been, as is well known, popular in the Rhine provinces, where he passed his youth; with a passionate admiration for the great French Emperor, with a passionate contempt for the sovereigns who had overthrown him, for their agents, and for their policy,—Heinrich Heine was in 1830 in no humour for any such gradual process of liberation from the old order of things as that which Goethe had followed. His counsel was for open war. With that terrible modern weapon, the pen, in his hand, he passed the remainder of his life in one fierce battle. What was that battle? the reader will ask. It was a life and death battle with Philistinism.

Philistinism!—we have not the expression in English. Perhaps we have not the word because we have so much of the thing. At Soli, I imagine, they did not talk of solecisms; and here, at the very headquarters of Goliath, nobody talks of Philistinism. The French have adopted the term *épicier* (grocer), to designate the sort of being whom the Germans designate by the term Philistine; but the French term,—besides that it casts a slur upon a respectable class, composed of living and susceptible members, while the original Philistines are dead and buried long ago,—is really, I think, in itself much less apt and expressive than the German term. Efforts have been made to obtain in English some term equivalent to *Philister* or *épicier;* Mr Carlyle has made several such efforts: "respectability with its thousand gigs," he says;—well, the occupant of every one of these gigs is, Mr Carlyle means, a Philistine. However, the word *respectable* is far too valuable a word to be thus perverted from its proper meaning; if the English are ever to have a word for the thing we are speaking of,—and so prodigious are the changes which the modern spirit is introducing, that even we English shall perhaps one day come to want such a word,—I think we had much better take the term *Philistine* itself.

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[1] He was born at Düsseldorf.

Philistine must have originally meant, in the mind of those who invented the nickname, a strong, dogged, unenlightened opponent of the chosen people, of the children of the light. The party of change, the would-be remodellers of the old traditional European order, the invokers of reason against custom, the representatives of the modern spirit in every sphere where it is applicable, regarded themselves, with the robust self-confidence natural to reformers as a chosen people, as children of the light. They regarded their adversaries as humdrum people, slaves to routine, enemies to light; stupid and oppressive, but at the same time very strong. This explains the love which Heine, that Paladin of the modern spirit, has for France; it explains the preference which he gives to France over Germany: "The French," he says, "are the chosen people of the new religion, its first gospels and dogmas have been drawn up in their language; Paris is the new Jerusalem, and the Rhine is the Jordan which divides the consecrated land of freedom from the land of the Philistines." He means that the French, as a people, have shown more accessibility to ideas than any other people; that prescription and routine have had less hold upon them than upon any other people; that they have shown most readiness to move and to alter at the bidding (real or supposed) of reason. This explains, too, the detestation which Heine had for the English: "I might settle in England," he says, in his exile, "if it were not that I should find there two things, coal-smoke and Englishmen; I cannot abide either." What he hated in the English was the "ächtbrittische Beschränktheit," as he calls it,—the *genuine British narrowness.* In truth, the English, profoundly as they have modified the old Middle-Age order, great as is the liberty which they have secured for themselves, have in all their changes proceeded, to use a familiar expression, by the rule of thumb; what was intolerably inconvenient to them they have suppressed, and as they have suppressed it, not because it was irrational, but because it was practically inconvenient, they have seldom in suppressing it appealed to reason, but always, if possible, to some precedent, or form, or letter, which served as a convenient instrument for their purpose, and which saved them from the necessity of recurring to general principles. They have thus become, in a certain sense, of all people the most inaccessible to ideas and the most impatient of them; inaccessible to them, because of their want of familiarity with them; and impatient of them because they have got on so well without them, that they despise those who, not having got on as well as themselves, still make a fuss for what they themselves have done so well without. But there has certainly followed from hence, in this country, somewhat of a general depression of pure intelligence: Philistia has come to be thought by us the true Land of Promise, and it is anything but that; the born lover of ideas, the born hater of commonplaces, must feel in this country, that the sky over his head is of brass and iron. The enthusiast for the idea, for reason, values reason, the idea, in and for themselves; he values them, irrespectively of the practical conveniences which their triumph may obtain for him; and the man who regards the possession of these practical conveniences as something sufficient in itself, something which compensates for the absence or surrender of the idea, of reason, is, in his eyes, a Philistine. This is why Heine so often and so mercilessly attacks the liberals; much as he hates conservatism he hates Philistinism even more, and whoever attacks conservatism itself ignobly, not as a child of light, not in the name of the idea, is a Philistine. Our Cobbett is thus for him, much as he disliked our clergy and aristocracy whom Cobbett attacked, a Philistine with six fingers on every hand and on every foot six toes, four-and-twenty in number: a Philistine, the staff of whose spear is like a weaver's beam. Thus he speaks of him:—

"While I translate Cobbett's words, the man himself comes bodily before my mind's eye, as I saw him at that uproarious dinner at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, with his scolding red face and his radical laugh, in which venomous hate mingles with a mocking exultation at his enemies' surely approaching downfall. He is a chained cur, who falls with equal fury on every one whom he does not know, often bites the best friend of the house in his calves, barks incessantly, and just because of this incessantness of his barking cannot get listened to, even when he barks at a real thief. Therefore the distinguished thieves who plunder

England do not think it necessary to throw the growling Cobbett a bone to stop his mouth. This makes the dog furiously savage, and he shows all his hungry teeth. Poor old Cobbett! England's dog! I have no love for thee, for every vulgar nature my soul abhors; but thou touchest me to the inmost soul with pity, as I see how thou strainest in vain to break loose and to get at those thieves, who make off with their booty before thy very eyes, and mock at thy fruitless springs and thine impotent howling."

But, in 1830, Heine very soon found that the fire-engines of the German governments were too much for his direct efforts at incendiarism. "What demon drove me," he cries, "to write my *Reisebilder*, to edit a newspaper, to plague myself with our time and its interests, to try and shake the poor German Hodge out of his thousand years' sleep in his hole? What good did I get by it? Hodge opened his eyes, only to shut them again immediately; he yawned, only to begin snoring again the next minute louder than ever; he stretched his stiff ungainly limbs, only to sink down again directly afterwards, and lie like a dead man in the old bed of his accustomed habits. I must have rest; but where am I to find a resting-place? In Germany I can no longer stay."

This is Heine's jesting account of his own efforts to rouse Germany: now for his pathetic account of them; it is because he unites so much wit with so much pathos that he is so effective a writer:—

"The Emperor Charles the Fifth sate in sore straits, in the Tyrol, encompassed by his enemies. All his knights and courtiers had forsaken him; not one came to his help. I know not if he had at that time the cheese face with which Holbein has painted him for us. But I am sure that under lip of his with its contempt for mankind, stuck out even more than it does in his portraits. How could he but contemn the tribe which in the sunshine of his prosperity had fawned on him so devotedly, and now, in his dark distress, left him all alone? Then suddenly his door opened, and there came in a man in disguise, and, as he threw back his cloak, the Kaiser recognised in him his faithful Conrad von der Rosen, the court jester. This man brought him comfort and counsel, and he was the court jester!

"'O German fatherland! dear German people! I am thy Conrad von der Rosen. The man whose proper business was to amuse thee, and who in good times should have catered only for thy mirth, makes his way into thy prison in time of need; here, under my cloak, I bring thee thy sceptre and crown; dost thou not recognise me, my Kaiser? If I cannot free thee, I will at least comfort thee, and thou shalt at least have one with thee who will prattle with thee about thy sorest affliction, and whisper courage to thee, and love thee, and whose best joke and best blood shall be at thy service. For thou, my people, art the true Kaiser, the true lord of the land! thy will is sovereign, and more legitimate far than that purple *Tel est notre plaisir*, which invokes a divine right with no better warrant than the anointings of shaven and shorn jugglers; thy will, my people, is the sole rightful source of power. Though now thou liest down in thy bonds, yet in the end will thy rightful cause prevail; the day of deliverance is at hand, a new time is beginning. My Kaiser, the night is over, and out there glows the ruddy dawn.'

"'Conrad von der Rosen, my fool, thou art mistaken; perhaps thou takest a headsman's gleaming axe for the sun, and the red of dawn is only blood.'

"'No, my Kaiser, it is the sun, though it is rising in the west; these six thousand years it has always risen in the east; it is high time there should come a change.'

"'Conrad von der Rosen, my fool, thou hast lost the bells out of thy red cap, and it has now such an odd look, that red cap of thine!'

"'Ah, my Kaiser, thy distress has made me shake my head so hard and fierce, that the fool's bells have dropped off my cap; the cap is none the worse for that.'

"'Conrad von der Rosen, my fool, what is that noise of breaking and cracking outside there?'

"'Hush! that is the saw and the carpenter's axe, and soon the doors of thy prison will be burst open, and thou wilt be free, my Kaiser!'

"'Am I then really Kaiser? Ah, I forgot, it is the fool who tells me so!'

"'Oh, sigh not my dear master, the air of thy prison makes thee so desponding! when once thou hast got thy rights again, thou wilt feel once more the bold imperial blood in thy veins, and thou wilt be proud like a Kaiser, and violent, and gracious, and unjust, and smiling, and ungrateful, as princes are.'

"'Conrad von der Rosen, my fool, when I am free, what wilt thou do then?'

"'I will then sew new bells on to my cap.'

"'And how shall I recompense thy fidelity?'

"'Ah, dear master, by not leaving me to die in a ditch!'"

I wish to mark Heine's place in modern European literature, the scope of his activity, and his value. I cannot attempt to give here a detailed account of his life, or a description of his separate works. In May 1831 he went over his Jordan, the Rhine, and fixed himself in his new Jerusalem, Paris. There, henceforward, he lived, going in general to some French watering-place in the summer, but making only one or two short visits to Germany during the rest of his life. His works, in verse and prose, succeeded each other without stopping; a collected edition of them, filling seven closely-printed octavo volumes, has been published in America; in the collected editions of few people's works is there so little to skip. Those who wish for a single good specimen of him should read his first important work, the work which made his reputation, the *Reisebilder*, or "Travelling Sketches:" prose and verse, wit and seriousness, are mingled in it, and the mingling of these is characteristic of Heine, and is nowhere to be seen practised more naturally and happily than in his *Reisebilder*. In 1847 his health, which till then had always been perfectly good, gave way. He had a kind of paralytic stroke. His malady proved to be a softening of the spinal marrow: it was incurable; it made rapid progress. In May 1848, not a year after his first attack, he went out of doors for the last time; but his disease took more than eight years to kill him. For nearly eight years he lay helpless on a couch, with the use of his limbs gone, wasted almost to the proportions of a child, wasted so that a woman could carry him about; the sight of one eye lost, that of the other greatly dimmed, and requiring, that it might be exercised, to have the palsied eyelid lifted and held up by the finger; all this, and suffering, besides this, at short intervals, paroxysms of nervous agony. I have said he was not pre-eminently brave; but in the astonishing force of spirit with which he retained his activity of mind, even his gaiety, amid all his suffering, and went on composing with undiminished fire to the last, he was truly brave. Nothing could clog that aërial lightness. "Pouvez-vous siffler?" his doctor asked him one day, when he was almost at his last gasp;—"siffler," as every one knows, has the double meaning of *to whistle* and *to hiss*:—"Hélas! non," was his whispered answer; "pas même une comédie de M. Scribe!" M. Scribe is, or was, the favourite dramatist of the French Philistine. "My nerves," he said to some one who asked him about them in 1855, the year of the great Exhibition in Paris, "my nerves are of that quite singularly remarkable miserableness of nature, that I am convinced they would get at the exhibition the grand medal for pain and misery." He read all the medical books which treated of his complaint. "But," said he to some one who found him thus engaged, "what good this reading is to do me I don't know, except that it will qualify me to give lectures in heaven on the ignorance of doctors on earth about diseases of the spinal marrow." What a matter of grim seriousness are our own ailments to most of us! yet with this gaiety Heine treated his to the end. That end, so long in coming, came at last. Heine died on the 17th of February 1856, at the age of fifty-eight. By his will he forbade that his remains should be transported to Germany. He lies buried in the cemetery of Montmartre, at Paris.

His direct political action was null, and this is neither to be wondered at nor regretted; direct political action is not the true function of literature, and Heine was a born man of letters. Even in his favourite France the turn taken by public affairs was not at all what he wished, though he read French politics by no means as we in England, most of us, read them. He thought things were tending there to the triumph of communism; and to a champion of the idea like Heine, what there is gross and narrow in communism was very repulsive. "It is all of no use," he cried on his deathbed, "the future belongs to our enemies, the Communists, and Louis Napoleon is their John the Baptist." "And yet,"—he added with all his old love for that remarkable entity, so full of attraction for him, so profoundly unknown in England, the French people,—"do not believe that God lets all this go forward merely as a grand comedy. Even though the Communists deny him to-day, he knows better than they do, that a time will come when they will learn to believe in him." After 1831, his hopes of soon upsetting the German governments had died away, and his propagandism took another, a more truly literary, character. It took the character of an intrepid application of the modern spirit to literature. To the ideas with which the burning questions of modern life filled him, he made all his subject-matter minister. He touched all the great points in the career of the human race, and here he but followed the tendency of the wide culture of Germany; but he touched them with a wand which brought them all under a light where the modern eye cares most to see them, and here he gave a lesson to the culture of Germany,—so wide, so impartial, that it is apt to become slack and powerless, and to lose itself in its materials for want of a strong central idea round which to group all its ideas. So the mystic and romantic school of Germany lost itself in the Middle Ages, was overpowered by their influence, came to ruin by its vain dreams of renewing them. Heine, with a far profounder sense of the mystic and romantic charm of the Middle Age than Görres, or Brentano, or Arnim, Heine the chief romantic poet of Germany, is yet also much more than a romantic poet; he is a great modern poet, he is not conquered by the Middle Age, he has a talisman by which he can feel,—along with but above the power of the fascinating Middle Age itself,—the power of modern ideas.

A French critic of Heine thinks he has said enough in saying that Heine proclaimed in German countries, with beat of drum, the ideas of 1789, and that at the cheerful noise of his drum the ghosts of the Middle Age took to flight. But this is rather too French an account of the matter. Germany, that vast mine of ideas, had no need to import ideas, as such, from any foreign country; and if Heine had carried ideas, as such, from France into Germany, he would but have been carrying coals to Newcastle. But that for which France, far less meditative than Germany, is eminent, is the prompt, ardent, and practical application of an idea, when she seizes it, in all departments of human activity which admit it. And that in which Germany most fails, and by failing in which she appears so helpless and impotent, is just the practical application of her innumerable ideas. "When Candide," says Heine himself, "came to Eldorado, he saw in the streets a number of boys who were playing with gold-nuggets instead of marbles. This degree of luxury made him imagine that they must be the king's children, and he was not a little astonished when he found that in Eldorado gold-nuggets are of no more value than marbles are with us, and that the schoolboys play with them. A similar thing happened to a friend of mine, a foreigner, when he came to Germany and first read German books. He was perfectly astounded at the wealth of ideas which he found in them; but he soon remarked that ideas in Germany are as plentiful as gold-nuggets in Eldorado, and that those writers whom he had taken for intellectual princes, were in reality only common schoolboys." Heine was, as he calls himself, a "Child of the French Revolution," an "Initiator," because he vigorously assured the Germans that ideas were not counters or marbles, to be played with for their own sake; because he exhibited in literature modern ideas applied with the utmost freedom, clearness, and originality. And therefore he declared that the great task of his life had been the endeavour to establish a cordial relation between France and Germany. It is because he thus operates a junction between the French spirit, and German ideas and German culture, that he founds something new, opens a fresh period, and deserves the attention of criticism far more than the German poets his contemporaries, who merely continue an old period till it expires. It may be predicted that in the literature of other countries, too, the French spirit is destined to make its influence felt as an element, in alliance with the native spirit, of novelty and movement,—as it has made its influence felt in German literature; fifty years hence a critic will be demonstrating to our grandchildren how this phenomenon has come to pass.

We in England, in our great burst of literature during the first thirty years of the present century, had no manifestation of the modern spirit, as this spirit manifests itself in Goethe's works or Heine's. And the reason is not far to seek. We had neither the German wealth of ideas, nor the French enthusiasm for applying ideas. There reigned in the mass of the nation that inveterate inaccessibility to ideas, that Philistinism,—to use the German nickname,—which reacts even on the individual genius that is exempt from it. In our greatest literary epoch, that of the Elizabethan age, English society at large was accessible to ideas, was permeated by them, was vivified by them, to a degree which has never been reached in England since. Hence the unique greatness in English literature of Shakspeare and his contemporaries; they were powerfully upheld by the intellectual life of their nation; they applied freely in literature the then modern ideas,—the ideas of the Renaissance and the Reformation. A few years afterwards the great English middle class, the kernel of the nation, the class whose intelligent sympathy had upheld a Shakspeare, entered the prison of Puritanism, and had the key turned on its spirit there for two hundred years. *He enlargeth a nation*, says Job, *and straiteneth it again.* In the literary movement of the beginning of the nineteenth century the signal attempt to apply freely the modern spirit was made in England by two members of the aristocratic class, Byron and Shelley. Aristocracies are, as such, naturally impenetrable by ideas; but their individual members have a high courage and a turn for breaking bounds; and a man of genius, who is the born child of the idea, happening to be born in the aristocratic ranks, chafes against the obstacles which prevent him from freely developing it. But Byron and Shelley did not succeed in their attempt freely to apply the modern spirit in English literature; they could not succeed in it; the resistance to baffle them, the want of intelligent sympathy to guide and uphold them, were too great. Their literary creation, compared with the literary creation of Shakspeare and Spenser, compared with the literary creation of Goethe and Heine, is a failure. The best literary creation of that time in England proceeded from men who did not make the same bold attempt as Byron and Shelley. What, in fact, was the career of the chief English men of letters, their contemporaries? The greatest of them, Wordsworth, retired (in Middle-Age phrase) into a monastery. I mean, he plunged himself in the inward life, he voluntarily cut himself off from the modern spirit. Coleridge took to opium. Scott became the historiographer-royal of feudalism. Keats passionately gave himself up to a sensuous genius, to his faculty for interpreting nature; and he died of consumption at twenty-five. Wordsworth, Scott, and Keats have left admirable works; far more solid and complete works than those which Byron and Shelley have left. But their works have this defect,—they do not belong to that which is the main current of the literature of modern epochs, they do not apply modern ideas to life; they constitute, therefore, *minor currents*, and all other literary work of our day, however popular, which has the same defect, also constitutes but a minor current. Byron and Shelley will long be remembered, long after the inadequacy of their actual work is clearly recognised for their passionate, their Titanic effort to flow in the main stream of modern literature; their names will be greater than their writings; *stat magni nominis umbra.*

Heine's literary good fortune was greater than that of Byron and Shelley. His theatre of operations was Germany, whose Philistinism does not consist in her want of ideas, or in her inaccessibility to ideas, for she teems with them and loves them, but, as I have said, in her feeble and hesitating application of modern ideas to life. Heine's intense modernism, his absolute freedom, his utter rejection of stock classicism and stock romanticism, his bringing all things under the point of view of the nineteenth century, were understood and laid to heart by Germany, through virtue of her immense, tolerant intellectualism, much as there was in all Heine said to affront and wound Germany. The wit and ardent modern spirit of France Heine joined to the culture, the sentiment, the thought of Germany. This is what makes him so remarkable; his wonderful clearness, lightness, and freedom, united with such power of feeling, and width of range. Is there anywhere keener wit than in his story of the French abbé who was his tutor, and who wanted to get from him that *la religion* is French for *der Glaube:* "Six times did he ask me the question: 'Henry, what is *der Glaube* in French?' and six times, and each time with a greater burst of tears, did I answer him—'It is *le crédit.*' And at the seventh time, his face purple with rage, the infuriated questioner screamed out: 'It is *la religion;* and a rain of cuffs descended upon me, and all the other boys burst out laughing. Since that day I have never been able to hear *la religion* mentioned, without feeling a tremor run through my back, and my cheeks grow red with shame." Or in that comment on the fate of

Professor Saalfeld, who had been addicted to writing furious pamphlets against Napoleon, and who was a professor at Göttingen, a great seat, according to Heine, of pedantry and Philistinism: "It is curious," says Heine, "the three greatest adversaries of Napoleon have all of them ended miserably. Castlereagh cut his own throat; Louis the Eighteenth rotted upon his throne; and Professor Saalfeld is still a professor at Göttingen." It is impossible to go beyond that.

What wit, again, in that saying which every one has heard: "The Englishman loves liberty like his lawful wife, the Frenchman loves her like his mistress, the German loves her like his old grandmother." But the turn Heine gives to this incomparable saying is not so well known; and it is by that turn he shows himself the born poet he is,—full of delicacy and tenderness, of inexhaustible resource, infinitely new and striking!—

"And yet, after all, no one can ever tell how things may turn out. The grumpy Englishman, in an ill-temper with his wife, is capable of some day putting a rope round her neck, and taking her to be sold at Smithfield. The inconstant Frenchman may become unfaithful to his adored mistress, and be seen fluttering about the Palais Royal after another. *But the German will never quite abandon his old grandmother;* he will always keep for her a nook by the chimney-corner, where she can tell her fairy stories to the listening children."

Is it possible to touch more delicately and happily both the weakness and the strength of Germany;—pedantic, simple, enslaved, free, ridiculous, admirable Germany?

And Heine's verse,—his *Lieder?* Oh, the comfort, after dealing with French people of genius, irresistibly impelled to try and express themselves in verse, launching out into a deep which destiny has sown with so many rocks for them,—the comfort of coming to a man of genius, who finds in verse his freest and most perfect expression, whose voyage over the deep of poetry destiny makes smooth! After the rhythm, to us, at any rate, with the German paste in our composition, so deeply unsatisfying, of—

"Ah! que me dites-vous, et que vous dit mon âme?
Que dit le ciel à l'aube et la flamme à la flamme?"

what a blessing to arrive at rhythms like—

> "Take, oh, take those lips away,
> That so sweetly were forsworn—"

or—

> "Siehst sehr sterbeblässlich aus,
> Doch getrost! du bist zu Haus—"

in which one's soul can take pleasure! The magic of Heine's poetical form is incomparable; he chiefly uses a form of old German popular poetry, a ballad-form which has more rapidity and grace than any ballad-form of ours; he employs this form with the most exquisite lightness and ease, and yet it has at the same time the inborn fulness, pathos, and old-world charm of all true forms of popular poetry. Thus in Heine's poetry, too, one perpetually blends the impression of French modernism and clearness, with that of German sentiment and fulness; and to give this blended impression is, as I have said, Heine's great characteristic. To feel it, one must read him; he gives it in his form as well as in his contents, and by translation I can only reproduce it so far as his contents give it. But even the contents of many of his poems are capable of giving a certain sense of it. Here, for instance, is a poem in which he makes his profession of faith to an innocent beautiful soul, a sort of Gretchen, the child of some simple mining people having their hut among the pines at the foot of the Hartz Mountains, who reproaches him with not holding the old articles of the Christian creed:—

"Ah, my child, while I was yet a little boy, while I yet sate upon my mother's knee, I believed in God the Father, who rules up there in Heaven, good and great;

"Who created the beautiful earth, and the beautiful men and women thereon; who ordained for sun, moon, and stars their courses.

"When I got bigger, my child, I comprehended yet a great deal more than this, and comprehended, and grew intelligent; and I believe on the Son also;

"On the beloved Son, who loved us, and revealed love to us; and, for his reward, as always happens, was crucified by the people.

"Now, when I am grown up, have read much, have travelled much, my heart swells within me, and with my whole heart I believe on the Holy Ghost.

"The greatest miracles were of his working, and still greater miracles doth he even now work; he burst in sunder the oppressor's stronghold, and he burst in sunder the bondsman's yoke.

"He heals old death-wounds, and renews the old right; all mankind are one race of noble equals before him.

"He chases away the evil clouds and the dark cobwebs of the brain, which have spoilt love and joy for us, which day and night have loured on us.

"A thousand knights, well harnessed, has the Holy Ghost chosen out to fulfil his will, and he has put courage into their souls.

"Their good swords flash, their bright banners wave; what, thou wouldst give much, my child, to look upon such gallant knights?

"Well, on me, my child, look! kiss me, and look boldly upon me! one of those knights of the Holy Ghost am I."

One has only to turn over the pages of his *Romancero*,—a collection of poems written in the first years of his illness, with his whole power and charm still in them, and not, like his latest poems of all, painfully touched by the air of his *Matrazzen-gruft*, his "mattress-grave"—to see Heine's width of range; the most varied figures succeed one another,—Rhampsinitus, Edith with the Swan Neck, Charles the First, Marie Antoinette, King David, a heroine of *Mabille*, Melisanda of Tripoli, Richard Cœur de Lion, Pedro the Cruel, Firdusi, Cortes, Dr Döllinger;—but never does Heine attempt to be *hübsch objectiv*, "beautifully objective," to become in spirit an old Egyptian, or an old Hebrew, or a Middle-Age knight, or a Spanish adventurer, or an English royalist; he always remains Heinrich Heine, a son of the nineteenth century. To give a notion of his tone, I will quote a few stanzas at the end of the *Spanish Atridæ*, in which he describes, in the character of a visitor at the court of Henry of Transtamare at Segovia, Henry's treatment of the children of his brother, Pedro the Cruel. Don Diego Albuquerque, his neighbour, strolls after dinner through the castle with him:

"In the cloister-passage, which leads to the kennels where are kept the king's hounds, that with their growling and yelping let you know a long way off where they are,

"There I saw, built into the wall, and with a strong iron grating for its outer face, a cell like a cage.

"Two human figures sate therein, two young boys; chained by the leg, they crouched in the dirty straw.

"Hardly twelve years old seemed the one, the other not much older; their faces fair and noble, but pale and wan with sickness.

"They were all in rags, almost naked; and their lean bodies showed wounds, the marks of ill-usage; both of them shivered with fever.

"They looked up at me out of the depth of their misery; 'who,' I cried in horror to Don Diego, 'are these pictures of wretchedness?'

"Don Diego seemed embarrassed; he looked round to see that no one was listening; then he gave a deep sigh; and at last, putting on the easy tone of a man of the world, he said:

"'These are a pair of king's sons, who were early left orphans; the name of their father was King Pedro, the name of their mother, Maria de Padilla.

"'After the great battle of Navarette, when Henry of Transtamare had relieved his brother, King Pedro, of the troublesome burden of the crown,

"'And likewise of that still more troublesome burden, which is called life, then Don Henry's victorious magnanimity had to deal with his brother's children.

"'He has adopted them, as an uncle should; and he has given them free quarters in his own castle.

"'The room which he has assigned to them is certainly rather small, but then it is cool in summer, and not intolerably cold in winter.

"'Their fare is rye-bread, which tastes as sweet as if the goddess Ceres had baked it express for her beloved Proserpine.

"'Not unfrequently, too, he sends a scullion to them with garbanzos, and then the young gentlemen know that it is Sunday in Spain.

"'But it is not Sunday every day, and garbanzos do not come every day; and the master of the hounds gives them the treat of his whip.

"'For the master of the hounds, who has under his superintendence the kennels and the pack, and the nephews' cage also,

"'Is the unfortunate husband of that lemon-faced woman with the white ruff, whom we remarked to-day at dinner.

"'And she scolds so sharp, that often her husband snatches his whip, and rushes down here, and gives it to the dogs and to the poor little boys.

"'But his majesty has expressed his disapproval of such proceedings, and has given orders that for the future his nephews are to be treated differently from the dogs.

"'He has determined no longer to entrust the disciplining of his nephews to a mercenary stranger, but to carry it out with his own hands.'

"Don Diego stopped abruptly; for the seneschal of the castle joined us, and politely expressed his hope that we had dined to our satisfaction."

Observe how the irony of the whole of that, finishing with the grim innuendo of the last stanza but one, is at once truly masterly and truly modern.

No account of Heine is complete which does not notice the Jewish element in him. His race he treated with the same freedom with which he treated everything else, but he derived a great force from it, and no one knew this better than he himself. He has excellently pointed out how in the sixteenth century there was a double renaissance,—a Hellenic renaissance and a Hebrew renaissance,—and how both have been great powers ever since. He himself had in him both the spirit of Greece and the spirit of Judæa; both these spirits reach the infinite, which is the true goal of all poetry and all art,—the Greek spirit by beauty, the Hebrew spirit by sublimity. By his perfection of literary form, by his love of clearness, by his love of beauty, Heine is Greek; by his intensity, by his untamableness, by his "longing which cannot be uttered," he is Hebrew. Yet what Hebrew ever treated the things of the Hebrews like this?—

"There lives at Hamburg, in a one-roomed lodging in the Baker's Broad Walk, a man whose name is Moses Lump; all the week he goes about in wind and rain, with his pack on his back, to earn his few shillings; but when on Friday evening he comes home, he finds the candlestick with seven candles lighted, and the table covered with a fair white cloth, and he puts away from him his pack and his cares, and he sits down to table with his squinting wife and yet more squinting daughter, and eats fish with them, fish which has been dressed in beautiful white garlic sauce, sings therewith the grandest psalms of King David, rejoices with his whole heart over the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt, rejoices, too, that all the wicked ones who have done the children of Israel hurt, have ended by taking themselves off; that King Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Haman, Antiochus, Titus, and all such people, are well dead, while he, Moses Lump, is yet alive, and eating fish with wife and daughter; and I can tell you, Doctor, the fish is delicate and the man is happy, he has no call to torment himself about culture, he sits contented in his religion and in his green bed-gown, like Diogenes in his tub, he contemplates with satisfaction his candles, which he on no account will snuff for himself; and I can tell you, if the candles burn a little dim, and the snuffers-woman, whose business it is to snuff them, is not at hand, and Rothschild the Great were at that moment to come in, with all his brokers, bill discounters, agents, and chief clerks, with whom he conquers the world, and Rothschild were to say: 'Moses Lump, ask of me what favour you will, and it shall be granted you;'—Doctor, I am convinced, Moses Lump would quietly answer: 'Snuff me those candles!' and Rothschild the Great would exclaim with admiration: 'If I were not Rothschild, I would be Moses Lump.'"

There Heine shows us his own people by its comic side; in the poem of the *Princess Sabbath* he shows it to us by a more serious side. The Princess Sabbath, "the *tranquil Princess*, pearl and flower of all beauty, fair as the Queen of Sheba, Solomon's bosom friend, that blue stocking from Ethiopia, who wanted to shine by her *esprit*, and with her wise riddles made herself in the long run a bore" (with Heine the sarcastic turn is never far off), this princess has for her betrothed a prince whom sorcery has transformed into an animal of lower race, the Prince Israel.

"A dog with the desires of a dog, he wallows all the week long in the filth and refuse of life, amidst the jeers of the boys in the street.

"But every Friday evening, at the twilight hour, suddenly the magic passes off, and the dog becomes once more a human being.

"A man with the feelings of a man, with head and heart raised aloft, in festal garb, in almost clean garb, he enters the halls of his Father.

"Hail, beloved halls of my royal Father! Ye tents of Jacob, I kiss with my lips your holy door-posts!"

Still more he shows us this serious side in his beautiful poem on Jehuda ben Halevy, a poet belonging to "the great golden age of the Arabian, Old-Spanish, Jewish school of poets," a contemporary of the troubadours:—

"He, too,—the hero whom we sing,—Jehuda ben Halevy, too, had his lady-love; but she was of a special sort.

"She was no Laura, whose eyes, mortal stars, in the cathedral on Good Friday kindled that world-renowned flame.

"She was no châtelaine, who in the blooming glory of her youth presided at tourneys, and awarded the victor's crown.

"No casuistess in the Gay Science was she, no lady *doctrinaire*, who delivered her oracles in the judgment-chamber of a Court of Love.

"She, whom the Rabbi loved, was a woebegone poor darling, a mourning picture of desolation . . . and her name was Jerusalem."

Jehuda ben Halevy, like the Crusaders, makes his pilgrimage to Jerusalem; and there, amid the ruins, sings a song of Sion which has became famous among his people:—

"That lay of pearled tears is the wide-famed Lament, which is sung in all the scattered tents of Jacob throughout the world.

"On the ninth day of the month which is called Ab, on the anniversary of Jerusalem's destruction by Titus Vespasianus.

"Yes, that is the song of Sion, which Jehuda ben Halevy sang with his dying breath amid the holy ruins of Jerusalem.

"Barefoot, and in penitential weeds, he sate there upon the fragment of a fallen column; down to his breast fell,

"Like a gray forest, his hair; and cast a weird shadow on the face which looked out through it,—his troubled pale face, with the spiritual eyes.

"So he sate and sang, like unto a seer out of the foretime to look upon; Jeremiah, the Ancient, seemed to have risen out of his grave.

"But a bold Saracen came riding that way, aloft on his barb, lolling in his saddle, and brandishing a naked javelin;

"Into the breast of the poor singer he plunged his deadly shaft, and shot away like a winged shadow.

"Quietly flowed the Rabbi's life-blood, quietly he sang his song to an end; and his last dying sigh was Jerusalem!"

Nor must Heine's sweetest note be unheard,—his plaintive note, his note of melancholy. Here is a strain which came from him as he lay, in the winter night, on his "mattress-grave" at Paris, and let his thoughts wander home to Germany, "the great child, entertaining herself with her Christmas-tree." "Thou tookest,"—he cries to the German exile,—

"Thou tookest thy flight towards sunshine and happiness; naked and poor returnest thou back. German truth, German shirts,—one gets them worn to tatters in foreign parts.

"Deadly pale are thy looks, but take comfort, thou art at home! one lies warm in German earth, warm as by the old pleasant fireside.

"Many a one, alas, became crippled, and could get home no more! longingly he stretches out his arms; God have mercy upon him!"

God have mercy upon him; for what remain of the days of the years of his life are few and evil. "Can it be that I still actually exist? My body is so shrunk that there is hardly anything of me left but my voice, and my bed makes me think of the melodious grave of the enchanter Merlin, which is in the forest of Broceliand in Brittany, under high oaks whose tops shine like green flames to heaven. Ah, I envy thee those trees, brother Merlin, and their fresh waving! for over my mattress-grave here in Paris no green leaves rustle; and early and late I hear nothing but the rattle of carriages, hammering, scolding, and the jingle of the piano. A grave without rest, death without the privileges of the departed, who have no longer any need ot spend money, or to write letters, or to compose books. What a melancholy situation!"

He died, and has left a blemished name; with his crying faults,—his intemperate susceptibility, his unscrupulousness in passion, his inconceivable attacks on his enemies, his still more inconceivable attacks on his friends, his want of generosity, his sensuality, his incessant mocking,—how could it be otherwise? Not only was he not one of Mr Carlyle's "respectable" people, he was profoundly *dis*-respectable; and not even the merit of not being a Philistine can make up for a man's being that. To his intellectual deliverance there was an addition of something else wanting, and that something else was something immense; the old-fashioned, laborious, eternally needful moral deliverance. Goethe says that he was deficient in *love;* to me his weakness seems to be not so much a deficiency in love as a deficiency in self-respect, in true dignity of character. But on this negative side of one's criticism of a man of great genius, I for my part, when I have once clearly marked that this negative side is and must be there, have no pleasure in dwelling. I prefer to say of Heine something positive. He is not an adequate interpreter of the modern world. He is only a brilliant soldier in the War of liberation of humanity. But, such as he is, he is (and posterity too, I am quite sure, will say this), in the European literature of that quarter of a century which follows the death of Goethe, incomparably the most important figure.

What a spendthrift, one is tempted to cry, is Nature! With what prodigality, in the march of generations, she employs human power, content to gather almost always little result from it, sometimes none! Look at Byron, that Byron whom the present generation of Englishmen are forgetting; Byron, the greatest natural force, the greatest elementary power, I cannot but think, which has appeared in our literature since Shakspeare. And what became of this wonderful production of nature? He shattered himself, he inevitably shattered himself to pieces against the huge, black, cloud-topped, interminable precipice of British Philistinism. But Byron, it may be said, was eminent only by his genius, only by his inborn force and fire; he had not the intellectual equipment of a supreme modern poet; except for his genius he was an ordinary nineteenth-century English nobleman, with little culture and with no ideas. Well, then, look at Heine. Heine had all the culture of Germany; in his head fermented all the ideas of modern Europe. And what have we got from Heine? A half-result, for want of moral balance, and of nobleness of soul and character. That is what I say; there is so much power, so many seem able to run well, so many give promise of running well; so few reach the goal, so few are chosen. *Many are called, few chosen.*

VI

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT

I READ the other day in the *Dublin Review*:—"We Catholics are apt to be cowed and scared by the lordly oppression of public opinion, and not to bear ourselves as men in the face of the anti-Catholic society of England. It is good to have an habitual consciousness that the public opinion of Catholic Europe looks upon Protestant England with a mixture of impatience and compassion, which more than balances the arrogance of the English people towards the Catholic Church in these countries."

The Holy Catholic Church, Apostolic and Roman, can take very good care of herself, and I am not going to defend her against the scorns of Exeter Hall. Catholicism is not a great visible force in this country, and the mass of mankind will always treat lightly even things the most venerable, if they do not present themselves as visible forces before its eyes. In Catholic countries, as the *Dublin Review* itself says with triumph, they make very little account of the greatness of Exeter Hall. The majority has eyes only for the things of the majority, and in England the immense majority is Protestant. And yet, in spite of all the shocks which the feeling of a good Catholic, like the writer in the *Dublin Review*, has in this Protestant country inevitably to undergo, in spite of the contemptuous insensibility to the grandeur of Rome which he finds so general and so hard to bear, how much has he to console him, how many acts of homage to the greatness of his religion may he see if he has his eyes open! I will tell him of one of them. Let him go in London to that delightful spot, that Happy Island in Bloomsbury, the reading-room of the British Museum. Let him visit its sacred quarter, the region where its theological books are placed. I am almost afraid to say what he will find there, for fear Mr

Spurgeon, like a second Caliph Omar, should give the library to the flames. He will find an immense Catholic work, the collection of the Abbé Migne, lording it over that whole region, reducing to insignificance the feeble Protestant forces which hang upon its skirts. Protestantism is duly represented; indeed Mr Panizzi knows his business too well to suffer it to be otherwise; all the varieties of Protestantism are there; there is the library of Anglo-Catholic Theology, learned, decorous, exemplary, but a little uninteresting; there are the works of Calvin, rigid, militant, menacing; there are the works of Dr Chalmers, the Scotch thistle valiantly doing duty as the rose of Sharon, but keeping something very Scotch about it all the time; there are the works of Dr Channing, the last word of religious philosophy in a land where every one has some culture, and where superiorities are discountenanced,—the flower of moral and intelligent mediocrity. But how are all these divided against one another, and how, though they were all united, are they dwarfed by the Catholic Leviathan, their neighbour! Majestic in its blue and gold unity, this fills shelf after shelf and compartment after compartment, its right mounting up into heaven among the white folios of the *Acta Sanctorum*, its left plunging down into hell among the yellow octavos of the *Law Digest*. Everything is there, in that immense *Patrologiæ Cursus Completus*, in that *Encyclopédie Théologique*, that *Nouvelle Encyclopédie Théologique*, that *Troisième Encyclopédie Théologique*; religion, philosophy, history, biography, arts, sciences, bibliography, gossip. The work embraces the whole range of human interests; like one of the great Middle-Age Cathedrals, it is in itself a study for a life. Like the net in Scripture, it drags everything to land, bad and good, lay and ecclesiastical, sacred and profane, so that it be but matter of human concern. Wide-embracing as the power whose product it is! a power, for history at any rate, eminently *the Church*; not, I think, the Church of the future, but indisputably the Church of the past and, in the past, the Church of the multitude.

This is why the man of imagination—nay, and the philosopher too, in spite of her propensity to burn him—will always have a weakness for the Catholic Church; because of the rich treasures of human life which have been stored within her pale. The mention of other religious bodies, or of their leaders, at once calls up in our mind the thought of men of a definite type as their adherents; the mention of Catholicism suggests no such special following. Anglicanism suggests the English episcopate; Calvin's name suggests Dr Candlish; Chalmers's, the Duke of Argyle; Channing's, Boston society; but Catholicism suggests,—what shall I say?—all the pell-mell of the men and women of Shakspeare's plays. This abundance the Abbé Migne's collection faithfully reflects. People talk of this or that work which they would choose, if they were to pass their life with only one; for my part I think I would choose the Abbé Migne's collection. *Quicquid agunt homines*,—everything, as I have said, is there. Do not seek in it splendour of form, perfection of editing; its paper is common, its type ugly, its editing indifferent, its printing careless. The greatest and most baffling crowd of misprints I ever met with in my life occurs in a very important page of the introduction to the *Dictionnaire des Apocryphes*. But this is just what you have in the world,—quantity rather than quality. Do not seek it in impartiality, the critical spirit; in reading it you must do the criticism for yourself; it loves criticism as little as the world loves it. Like the world, it chooses to have things all its own way, to abuse its adversary, to back its own notion, through thick and thin, to put forward all the *pros* for its own notion, to suppress all the *contras;* it does just all that the world does, and all that the critical shrinks from. Open the *Dictionnaire des Erreurs Sociales:* "The religious persecutions of Henry the Eighth's and Edward the Sixth's time abated a little in the reign of Mary, to break out again with new fury in the reign of Elizabeth." There is a summary of the history of religious persecution under the Tudors! But how unreasonable to reproach the Abbé Migne's work with wanting a criticism, which, by the very nature of things, it cannot have, and not rather to be grateful to it for its abundance, its variety, its infinite suggestiveness, its happy adoption, in many a delicate circumstance, of the urbane tone and temper of the man of the world, instead of the acrid tone and temper of the fanatic.

Still, in spite of their fascinations, the contents of this collection sometimes rouse the critical spirit within one. It happened that lately, after I had been thinking much of

Marcus Aurelius and his times, I took down the *Dictionnaire des Origines du Christianisme*, to see what it had to say about paganism and pagans. I found much what I expected. I read the article, *Révélation Évangélique, sa Nécéssite.* There I found what a sink of iniquity was the whole pagan world; how one Roman fed his oysters on his slaves, how another put a slave to death that a curious friend might see what dying was like; how Galen's mother tore and bit her waiting-women when she was in a passion with them. I found this account of the religion of paganism: "Paganism invented a mob of divinities with the most hateful character, and attributed to them the most monstrous and abominable crimes. It personified in them drunkenness, incest, kidnapping, adultery, sensuality, knavery, cruelty, and rage." And I found that from this religion there followed such practice as was to be expected: "What must naturally have been the state of morals under the influence of such a religion, which penetrated with its own spirit the public life, the family life, and the individual life of antiquity?"

The colours in this picture are laid on very thick, and I for my part cannot believe that any human societies, with a religion and practice such as those just described, could ever have endured as the societies of Greece and Rome endured, still less have done what the societies of Greece and Rome did. We are not brought far by descriptions of the vices of great cities, or even of individuals driven mad by unbounded means of self-indulgence. Feudal and aristocratic life in Christendom has produced horrors of selfishness and cruelty not surpassed by the noble of pagan Rome; and then, again, in antiquity there is Marcus Aurelius's mother to set against Galen's. Eminent examples of vice and virtue in individuals prove little as to the state of societies. What, under the first emperors, was the condition of the Roman poor upon the Aventine compared with that of our poor in Spitalfields and Bethnal Green? What, in comfort, morals, and happiness were the rural population of the Sabine country under Augustus's rule, compared with the rural population of Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire under the rule of Queen Victoria?

But these great questions are not now for me. Without trying to answer them, I ask myself, when I read such declamation as the foregoing, if I can find anything that will give me a near, distinct sense of the real difference in spirit and sentiment between paganism and Christianity, and of the natural effect of this difference upon people in general. I take a representative religious poem of paganism —of the paganism which all the world has in its mind, when it speaks of paganism. To be a representative poem, it must be one for popular use, one that the multitude listens to. Such a religious poem may be found at the end of one of the best and happiest of Theocritus's idylls, the fifteenth. In order that the reader may the better go along with me in the line of thought I am following, I will translate it; and, that he may see the medium in which religious poetry of this sort is found existing, the society out of which it grows, the people who form it and are formed by it, I will translate the whole, or nearly the whole, of the idyll (it is not long) in which the poem occurs.

The idyll is dramatic. Somewhere about two hundred and eighty years before the Christian era, a couple of Syracusan women, staying at Alexandria, agreed on the occasion of a great religious solemnity,—the feast of Adonis,—to go together to the palace of King Ptolemy Philadelphus, to see the image of Adonis, which the queen Arsinoe, Ptolemy's wife, had had decorated with peculiar magnificence. A hymn, by a celebrated performer, was to be recited over the image. The names of the two women are Gorgo and Praxinoe; their maids, who are mentioned in the poem, are called Eunoe and Eutychis. Gorgo comes by appointment to Praxinoe's house to fetch her, and there the dialogue begins:—

Gorgo.—Is Praxinoe at home?

Praxinoe.—My dear Gorgo, at last! Yes, here I am. Eunoe, find a chair,—get a cushion for it.

Gorgo.—It will do beautifully as it is.

Praxinoe.—Do sit down.

Gorgo.—Oh, this gad-about spirit! I could hardly get to you, Praxinoe, through all the crowd and all the carriages. Nothing but heavy boots, nothing but men in uniform. And what a journey it is! My dear child, you really live *too* far off.

Praxinoe.—It is all that insane husband of mine. He has chosen to come out here to the end of the world, and take a hole of a place,—for a house it is not,—on purpose that you and I might not be neighbours. He is always just the same;—anything to quarrel with one! anything for spite!

Gorgo.—My dear, don't talk so of your husband before the little fellow. Just see how astonished he looks at you. Never mind Zopyrio, my pet, she is not talking about papa.

Praxinoe.—Good heavens! the child does really understand.

Gorgo.—Pretty papa!

Praxinoe.—That pretty papa of his the other day (though I told him beforehand to mind what he was about), when I sent him to a shop to buy soap and rouge, brought me home salt instead;—stupid, great, big, interminable animal!

Gorgo.—Mine is just the fellow to him . . . But never mind now, get on your things and let us be off to the palace to see the Adonis. I hear the Queen's decorations are something splendid.

Praxinoe.—In grand people's houses everything is grand. What things you have seen in Alexandria! What a deal you will have to tell to anybody who has never been here!

Gorgo.—Come, we ought to be going.

Praxinoe.—Every day is holiday to people who have nothing to do. Eunoe, pick up your work; and take care, lazy girl, how you leave it lying about again; the cats find it just the bed they like. Come, stir yourself, fetch me some water, quick! I wanted the water first, and the girl brings me the soap. Never mind; give it me. Not all that, extravagant! Now pour out the water;—stupid! why don't you take care of my dress? That will do. I have got my hands washed as it pleased God. Where is the key of the large wardrobe? Bring it here;—quick!

Gorgo.—Praxinoe, you can't think how well that dress, made full, as you have got it, suits you. Tell me, how much did it cost?—the dress by itself, I mean.

Praxinoe.—Don't talk of it, Gorgo; more than eight guineas of good hard money. And about the work on it I have almost worn my life out.

Gorgo.—Well, you couldn't have done better.

Praxinoe.—Thank you. Bring me my shawl, and put my hat properly on my head;—properly. No, child (*to her little boy*), I am not going to take you; there's a bogy on horseback, who bites. Cry as much as you like; I'm not going to have you lamed for life. Now, we'll start. Nurse, take the little one and amuse him; call the dog in, and shut the street door. (*They go out.*) Good heavens! what a crowd of people! How on earth are we ever to get through all this? They are like ants: you can't count them. My dearest Gorgo, what will become of us? here are the royal Horse Guards. My good man, don't ride over me! Look at that bay horse rearing bolt upright; what a vicious one! Eunoe, you mad girl, do take care!—that horse will certainly be the death of the man on his back. How glad I am now, that I left the child safe at home!

Gorgo.—All right Praxinoe, we are safe behind them; and they have gone on to where they are stationed.

Praxinoe.—Well, yes, I begin to revive again. From the time I was a little girl I have had more horror of horses and snakes than of anything in the world. Let us get on; here's a great crowd coming this way upon us.

Gorgo (*to an old woman*).—Mother, are you from the palace?

Old Woman.—Yes, my dears.

Gorgo.—Has one a tolerable chance of getting there?

Old Woman.—My pretty young lady, the Greeks got to Troy by dint of trying hard; trying will do anything in this world.

Gorgo.—The old creature has delivered herself of an oracle and departed.

Praxinoe.—Women can tell you everything about everything, Jupiter's marriage with Juno not excepted.

Gorgo.—Look, Praxinoe, what a squeeze at the palace gates!

Praxinoe.—Tremendous! Take hold of me, Gorgo; and you, Eunoe, take hold of Eutychis!—tight hold, or you'll be lost. Here we go in altogether. Hold tight to us, Eunoe! Oh, dear! oh, dear! Gorgo, there's my scarf torn right in two. For heaven's sake, my good man, as you hope to be saved, take care of my dress!

Stranger.—I'll do what I can, but it doesn't depend upon me.

Praxinoe.—What heaps of people! They push like a drove of pigs.

Stranger.—Don't be frightened, ma'am, we are all right.

Praxinoe.—May you be all right, my dear sir, to the last day you live, for the care you have taken of us! What a kind, considerate man! There is Eunoe jammed in a squeeze. Push, you goose, push! Capital! We are all of us the right side of the door, as the bridegroom said when he had locked himself in with the bride.

Gorgo.—Praxinoe, come this way. Do but look at that work, how delicate it is!—how exquisite! Why, they might wear it in heaven.

Praxinoe.—Heavenly patroness of needlewomen, what hands were hired to do that work? Who designed those beautiful patterns? They seem to stand up and move about, as if they were real;—as if they were living things, and not needlework. Well, man is a wonderful creature! And look, look, how charming he lies there on his silver couch, with just a soft down on his cheeks, that beloved Adonis,—Adonis, whom one loves even though he is dead!

Another Stranger.—You wretched women, do stop your incessant chatter! Like turtles, you go on for ever. They are enough to kill one with their broad lingo,—nothing but *ā, ā, ā.*

Gorgo.—Lord, where does the man come from? What is it to you if we *are* chatterboxes? Order about your own servants! Do you give orders to Syracusan women? If you want to know, we came originally from Corinth, as Bellerophon did; we speak Peloponnesian. I suppose Dorian women may be allowed to have a Dorian accent.

Praxinoe.—O, honey-sweet Proserpine, let us have no more masters than the one we've got! We don't the least care for *you;* pray don't trouble yourself for nothing.

Gorgo.—Be quiet, Praxinoe! That first-rate singer, the Argive woman's daughter, is going to sing the *Adonis* hymn. She is the same who was chosen to sing the dirge last year. We are sure to have something first-rate from *her*. She is going through her airs and graces ready to begin.

So far the dialogue; and as it stands in the original, it can hardly be praised too highly. It is a page torn fresh out of the book of human life. What freedom! What animation! What gaiety! What naturalness! It is said that Theocritus in composing this poem, borrowed from a work of Sophron, a poet of an earlier and better time; but, even if this is so, the form is still Theocritus's own, and how excellent is that form, how masterly! And this in a Greek poem of the decadence!—for Theocritus's poetry, after all, is poetry of the decadence. When such is Greek poetry of the decadence, what must be Greek poetry of the prime?

Then the singer begins her hymn:—

"Mistress, who loveth the haunts of Golgi, and Idalium, and high-peaked Eryx, Aphrodite that playest with gold! how have the delicate-footed Hours, after twelve months, brought thy Adonis back to thee from the ever-flowing Acheron! Tardiest of the immortals are the boon Hours, but all mankind wait their approach with longing, for they ever bring something with them. O Cypris, Dione's child! thou didst change—so is the story among men—Berenice from mortal to immortal, by dropping ambrosia into her fair bosom; and in gratitude to thee for this, O thou of many names and many temples! Berenice's daughter, Arsinoe, lovely Helen's living counterpart, makes much of Adonis with all manner of braveries.

"All fruits that the tree bears are laid before him, all treasures of the garden in silver baskets, and alabaster boxes, gold-inlaid, of Syrian ointment; and all confectionery that cunning women make on their kneading-tray, kneading up every sort of flowers with white meal, and all that they make of sweet honey and delicate oil, and all winged and creeping things are here set before him. And there are built for him green bowers with wealth of tender anise, and little boy-loves flutter about over them, like young nightingales trying their new wings on the tree, from bough to bough. Oh, the ebony, the gold, the eagle of white ivory that bears aloft his cup-bearer to Kronos-born Zeus! And up there, see! a second couch strewn for lovely Adonis, scarlet coverlets softer than sleep itself (so Miletus and the Samian wool-grower will say); Cypris has hers, and the rosy-armed Adonis has his, that eighteen or nineteen-year-old bridegroom. His kisses will not wound, the hair on his lip is yet light.

"Now, Cypris, good-night, we leave thee with thy bridegroom; but to-morrow morning, with the earliest dew, we will one and all bear him forth to where the waves splash upon the sea-strand, and letting loose our locks, and letting fall our robes, with bosoms bare, we will set up this, our melodious strain:

"'Beloved Adonis, alone of the demigods (so men say) thou art permitted to visit both us and Acheron! This lot had neither Agamemnon, nor the mighty moon-struck hero Ajax, nor Hector the first-born of Hecuba's twenty children, nor Patroclus, nor Pyrrhus who came home from Troy, nor those yet earlier Lapithæ and the sons of Deucalion, nor the Pelasgians, the root of Argos and of Pelop's isle. Be gracious to us now, loved Adonis, and be favourable to us for the year to come! Dear to us hast thou been at this coming, dear to us shalt thou be when thou comest again.'"

The poem concludes with a characteristic speech from Gorgo:—

"Praxinoe, certainly women are wonderful things. That lucky woman to know all that! and luckier still to have such a splendid voice! And now we must see about getting home. My husband has not had his dinner. That man is all vinegar, and nothing else; and if you keep him waiting for his dinner, he's dangerous to go near. Adieu, precious Adonis, and may you find us all well when you come next year!"

So, with the hymn still in her ears, says the incorrigible Gorgo.

But what a hymn that is! Of religious emotion, in our acceptation of the words, and of the comfort springing from religious emotion, not a particle. And yet many elements of religious emotion are contained in the beautiful story of Adonis. Symbolically treated, as the thoughtful man might treat it, as the Greek mysteries undoubtedly treated it, this story was capable of a noble and touching application, and could lead the soul to elevating and consoling thoughts. Adonis was the sun in his summer and in his winter course, in his time of triumph and his time of defeat; but in his time of triumph still moving towards his defeat, in his time of defeat still returning towards his triumph. Thus he became an emblem of the power of life and the bloom of beauty, the power of human life and the bloom of human beauty, hastening inevitably to diminution and decay, yet in that very decay finding

> "Hope, and a renovation without end."

But nothing of this appears in the story as prepared for popular religious use, as presented to the multitude in a popular religious ceremony. Its treatment is not devoid of a certain grace and beauty, but it has nothing whatever that is elevating, nothing that is consoling, nothing that is in our sense of the word religious. The religious ceremonies of Christendom, even on occasion of the most joyful and mundane matters, present the multitude with strains of profoundly religious character, such as the *Kyrie eleison* and the *Te Deum*. But this Greek hymn to Adonis adapts itself exactly to the tone and temper of a gay and pleasure-loving multitude,—of light-hearted people, like Gorgo and Praxinoe, whose moral nature is much of the same calibre as that of Phillina in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, people who seem never made to be serious, never made to be sick or sorry. And, if they happen to be sick or sorry, what will they do then? But that we have no right to ask. Phillina, within the enchanted bounds of Goethe's novel, Gorgo and Praxinoe, within the enchanted bounds of Theocritus's poem, never will be sick and sorry, never can be sick and sorry. The ideal, cheerful, sensuous, pagan life is not sick or sorry. No; yet its natural end is in the sort of life which Pompeii and Herculaneum bring so vividly before us,—a life which by no means in itself suggests the thought of horror and misery, which even, in many ways, gratifies the senses and the understanding; but by the very intensity and unremittingness of its appeal to the senses and the understanding, by its stimulating a single side of us too absolutely, ends by fatiguing and revolting us; ends by leaving us with a sense of tightness, of oppression,—with a desire for an utter change, for clouds, storms, effusion, and relief.

In the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the clouds and storms had come, when the gay sensuous pagan life was gone, when men were not living by the senses and understanding, when they were looking for the speedy coming of Antichrist, there appeared in Italy, to the north of Rome, in the beautiful Umbrian country at the foot of the Apennines, a figure of the most magical power and charm, St Francis. His century is, I think, the most interesting in the history of Christianity after its primitive age, more interesting than even the century of the Reformation; and one of the chief figures, perhaps the very chief, to which this interest attaches itself, is St Francis. And why? Because of the profound popular instinct which enabled him, more than any man since the primitive age, to fit religion for popular use. He brought religion to the people. He founded the most popular body of ministers of religion that has ever existed in the Church. He transformed monachism by uprooting the stationary monk, delivering him from the bondage of property, and sending him, as a mendicant friar, to be a stranger and sojourner, not in the wilderness, but in the most crowded haunts of men, to console them and do them good. This popular instinct of his is at the bottom of his famous marriage with poverty. Poverty and suffering are the condition of the people, the multitude, the immense majority of mankind; and it was towards this *people* that his soul yearned. "He listens," it was said of him, "to those to whom God himself will not listen."

So in return, as no other man he was listened to. When an Umbrian town or village heard of his approach, the whole population went out in joyful procession to meet him, with green boughs, flags, music, and songs of gladness. The master, who began with two disciples, could in his own lifetime (and he died at forty-four) collect to keep Whitsuntide with him, in presence of an immense multitude, five thousand of his Minorites. He found fulfilment to his prophetic cry: "I hear in my ears the sound of the tongues of all the nations who shall come unto us; Frenchmen, Spaniards, Germans, Englishmen. The Lord will make of us a great people, even unto the ends of the earth."

Prose could not satisfy this ardent soul, and he made poetry. Latin was too learned for this simple, popular nature, and he composed in his mother tongue, in Italian. The beginnings of the mundane poetry of the Italians are in Sicily, at the court of kings; the beginnings of their religious poetry are in Umbrian, with St Francis. His are the humble upper waters of a mighty stream; at the beginning of the thirteenth century it is St Francis, at the end, Dante. Now it happens that St Francis, too, like the Alexandrian songstress, has his hymn for the sun, for Adonis. *Canticle of the Sun*, *Canticle of the Creatures*,—the poem goes by both names. Like the Alexandrian hymn, it is designed for popular use, but not for use by King Ptolemy's people; artless in language, irregular in rhythm, it matches with the childlike genius that produced it, and the simple natures that loved and repeated it:—

"O most high, almighty, good Lord God, to thee belong praise, glory, honour and all blessing!

"Praised be my Lord God with all his creatures; and specially our brother the sun, who brings us the day, and who brings us the light; fair is he, and shining with a very great splendour: O Lord, he signifies to us thee!

"Praised be my Lord for our sister the moon, and for the stars, the which he has set clear and lovely in heaven.

"Praised be my Lord for our brother the wind, and for air and cloud, calms and all weather, by the which thou upholdest in life all creatures.

"Praised be my Lord for our sister water, who is very serviceable unto us, and humble, and precious, and clean.

"Praised be my lord for our brother fire, through whom thou givest us light in the darkness; and he is bright, and pleasant, and very mighty, and strong.

"Praised be my Lord for our mother the earth, the which doth sustain us and keep us, and bringeth forth divers fruits, and flowers of many colours, and grass.

"Praised be my Lord for all those who pardon one another for his love's sake, and who endure weakness and tribulation; blessed are they who peaceably shall endure, for thou, O most Highest, shalt give them a crown!

"Praised be my Lord for our sister, the death of the body, from whom no man escapeth. Woe to him who dieth in mortal sin! Blessed are they who are found walking by thy most holy will, for the second death shall have no power to do them harm.

"Praise ye, and bless ye the Lord, and give thanks unto him, and serve him with great humility."

It is natural that man should take pleasure in his senses. It is natural, also, that he should take refuge in his heart and imagination from his misery. When one thinks what human life is for the vast majority of mankind, how little of a feast for their senses it can possibly be, one understands the charm for them of a refuge offered in the heart and imagination. Above all, when one thinks what human life was in the Middle Ages, one understands the charm of such a refuge.

Now, the poetry of Theocritus's hymn is poetry treating the world according to the demand of the senses; the poetry of St Francis's hymn is poetry treating the world according to the demand of the heart and imagination. The first takes the world by its outward, sensible side; the second by its inward, symbolical side. The first admits as much of the world as is pleasure-giving; the second admits the whole world, rough and smooth, painful and pleasure-giving, all alike, but all transfigured by the power of a spiritual emotion, all brought under a law of supernatural love, having its seat in the soul. It can thus even say: "Praised be my Lord for *our sister, the death of the body*."

But these very words are an indication that we are touching upon an extreme. When we see Pompeii, we can put our finger upon the pagan sentiment in its extreme. And when we read of Monte Alverno and the *stigmata;* when we read of the repulsive, because self-caused, sufferings of the end of St Francis's life; when we find him even saying, "I have sinned against my brother the ass," meaning by these words that he had been too hard upon his own body; when we find him doubting "whether he who had destroyed himself by the severity of his penances could find mercy in eternity," we can put our finger on the mediæval Christian sentiment in its extreme. Human nature is neither all senses and understanding, nor all heart and imagination. Pompeii was a sign that for humanity at large the measure of sensualism had been overpassed; St Francis's doubt was a sign that for humanity at large the measure of spiritualism had been overpassed. Humanity, in its violent rebound from one extreme, had swung from Pompeii to Monte Alverno; but it was sure not to stay there.

The Renaissance is, in part, a return towards the pagan spirit, in the special sense in which I have been using the word pagan; a return towards the life of the senses and the understanding. The Reformation, on the other hand, is the very opposite to this; in Luther there is nothing Greek or pagan; vehemently as he attacked the adoration of St Francis, Luther had himself something of St Francis in him; he was a thousand times more akin to St Francis than to Theocritus or to Voltaire. The real Reformation, Luther's Reformation, the German Reformation, was a reaction of the moral and spiritual sense against the carnal and pagan sense; it was a religious revival like St Francis's, but this time against the Church of Rome, not within her; for the carnal and pagan sense had now, in the government of the Church of Rome herself, its prime representative. The grand reaction against the rule of the heart and imagination, the strong return towards the rule of the senses and understanding, is in the eighteenth century. And this reaction has had no more brilliant champion than a man of the nineteenth, of whom I have already spoken; a man who could feel not only the pleasurableness but the poetry of the life of the senses (and the life of the senses has its deep poetry;) a man who, in his very last poem, divided the whole world into "barbarians and Greeks,"—Heinrich Heine. No man has reproached the Monte Alverno extreme in sentiment, the Christian extreme, the heart and imagination subjugating the senses and understanding, more bitterly than Heine; no man has extolled the Pompeii extreme, the pagan extreme, more rapturously.

"All through the Middle Age these sufferings, this fever, this over-tension lasted; and we moderns still feel in all our limbs the pain and weakness from them. Even those of us who are cured have still to live with a hospital atmosphere all around us, and find ourselves as wretched in it as a strong man among the sick. Some day or other, when humanity shall have got quite well again, when the body and soul shall have made their peace together, the factitious quarrel which Christianity has cooked up between them will appear something hardly comprehensible. The fairer and happier generations, offspring of unfettered unions, that will rise up and bloom in the atmosphere of a religion of pleasure, will smile sadly when they think of their poor ancestors, whose life was passed in melancholy abstinence from the joys of this beautiful earth, and who faded away into spectres, from the mortal compression which they put upon the warm and glowing emotions of sense. Yes, with assurance I say it, our descendants will be fairer and happier than we are; for I am a believer in progress, and I hold God to be a kind being who has intended man to be happy."

That is Heine's sentiment, in the prime of life, in the glow of activity, amid the brilliant whirl of Paris. I will no more blame it than I blamed the sentiment of the Greek hymn to Adonis. I wish to decide nothing as of my own authority; the great art of criticism is to get oneself out of the way and to let humanity decide. Well, the sentiment of the "religion of pleasure" has much that is natural in it; humanity will gladly accept it if it can live by it; to live by it one must never be sick or sorry, and the old, ideal, limited, pagan world never, I have said, *was* sick or sorry, never at least shows itself to us sick or sorry:—

"What pipes and timbrels! what wild ecstasy!"

For our imagination, Gorgo and Praxinoe cross the human stage chattering in their blithe Doric,—*like turtles*, as the cross stranger said,—and keep gaily chattering on till they disappear. But in the new, real, immense, post-pagan world,—in the barbarian world,—the shock of accident is unceasing, the serenity of existence is perpetually troubled, not even a Greek like Heine can get across the mortal stage without bitter calamity. How does the sentiment of the "religion of pleasure" serve then? does it help, does it console? Can a man live by it? Heine again shall answer; Heine just twenty years older, stricken with incurable disease, waiting for death:—

"The great pot stands smoking before me, but I have no spoon to help myself. What does it profit me that my health is drunk at banquets out of gold cups and in most exquisite wines, if I myself, while these ovations are going on, lonely and cut off from the pleasures of the world, can only just wet my lips with barley-water? What good does it do me that all the roses of Shiraz open their leaves and burn for me with passionate tenderness? Alas! Shiraz is some two thousand leagues from the Rue d'Amsterdam, where in the solitude of my sick chamber all the perfume I smell is that of hot towels. Alas! the mockery of God is heavy upon me! The great Author of the universe, the Aristophanes of Heaven, has determined to make the petty earthly author, the so-called Aristophanes of Germany, feel to his heart's core what pitiful needle-pricks his cleverest sarcasms have been, compared with the thunderbolts which his divine humour can launch against feeble mortals! . . .

"In the year 1340, says the 'Chronicle of Limburg,' all over Germany everybody was strumming and humming certain songs more lovely and delightful than any which had ever yet been known in German countries: and all people, old and young, the women particularly, were perfectly mad about them, so that from morning till night you heard nothing else. Only, the 'Chronicle' adds, the author of these songs happened to be a young clerk, afflicted with leprosy, and living apart from all the world in a desolate place. The excellent reader does not require to be told how horrible a complaint was leprosy in the Middle Ages, and how the poor wretches who had this incurable plague were banished from society, and had to keep at a distance from every human being. Like living corpses, in a grey gown reaching down to the feet, and with the hood brought over their face, they went about, carrying in their hands an enormous rattle, called Saint Lazarus's rattle. With this rattle they gave notice of their approach, that every one might have time to get out of their way. This poor clerk, then, whose poetical gift the 'Limburg Chronicle' extols, was a leper, and he sate moping in the dismal deserts of his misery, whilst all Germany, gay and tuneful, was praising his songs.

"Sometimes, in my sombre visions of the night, I imagine that I see before me the poor leprosy-stricken clerk of the 'Limburg Chronicle,' and from under his grey hood his distressed eyes look out upon me in a fixed and strange fashion; but the next instant he disappears, and I hear dying away in the distance, like the echo of a dream, the dull creak of Saint Lazarus's rattle."

We have come a long way from Theocritus there: the expression of that has nothing of the clear, positive, happy, pagan character; it has much more the character of one of the indeterminate grotesques of the suffering Middle Age. Profoundness and power it has, though at the same time it is not truly poetical; it is not natural enough for that, there is too much waywardness in it, too much bravado. But as a condition of sentiment to be popular,—to be a comfort for the mass of mankind, under the pressure of calamity, to live by,—what a manifest failure is this last word of the religion of pleasure! One man in many millions, a Heine, may console himself, and keep himself erect in suffering, by a colossal irony of this sort, by covering himself and the universe with the red fire of this sinister mockery: but the many millions cannot,—cannot if they would. That is where the sentiment of a religion of sorrow has such a vast advantage over the sentiment of a religion of pleasure; in its power to be a general, popular, religious sentiment, a stay for the mass of mankind, whose lives are full of hardship. It really succeeds in conveying far more joy, far more of what the mass of mankind are so much without, than its rival. I do not mean joy in prospect only, but joy in possession, actual enjoyment of the world. Mediæval Christianity is reproached with its gloom and austerities; it assigns the material world, says Heine, to the devil. But yet what a fulness of delight does St Francis manage to draw from this material world itself, and from its commonest and most universally enjoyed elements,—sun, air, earth, water, plants! His hymn expresses a far more cordial sense of happiness, even in the material world, than the hymn of Theocritus. It is this which made the fortune of mediæval Christianity,—its gladness, not its sorrow; not its assigning the spiritual world to Christ, and the material world to the devil, but its drawing from the spiritual world a source of joy so abundant that it ran over upon the material world and transfigured it.

I have said a great deal of harm of paganism; and, taking paganism to mean a state of things which it is commonly taken to mean, and which did really exist, no more harm than it well deserved. Yet I must not end without reminding the reader, that before this state of things appeared, there was an epoch in Greek life,—in pagan life,—of the highest possible beauty and value, an epoch which alone goes far towards making Greece the Greece we mean when we speak of Greece,—a country hardly less important to mankind than Judæa. The poetry of later paganism lived by the senses and understanding; the poetry of mediæval Christianity lived by the heart and imagination. But the main element of the modern spirit's life is neither the senses and understanding, nor the heart and imagination; it is the imaginative reason. And there is a century in Greek life, —the century preceding the Peloponnesian war, from about the year 530 to the year 430 B.C.,—in which poetry made, it seems to me, the noblest, the most successful effort she has ever made as the priestess of the imaginative reason, of the element by which the modern spirit, if it would live right, has chiefly to live. Of this effort, of which the four great names are Simonides, Pindar, Æschylus, Sophocles, I must not now attempt more than the bare mention; but it is right, it is necessary, after all I have said, to indicate it. No doubt that effort was imperfect. Perhaps everything, take it at what point in its existence you will, carries within itself the fatal law of its own ulterior development. Perhaps, even of the life of Pindar's time, Pompeii was the inevitable bourne. Perhaps the life of their beautiful Greece could not afford to its poets all that fulness of varied experience, all that power of emotion, which

> ". . . the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world,"

affords the poet of after-times. Perhaps in Sophocles the thinking-power a little overbalances the religious sense, as in Dante the religious sense overbalances the thinking-power. The present has to make its own poetry, and not even Sophocles and his compeers, any more than Dante and Shakspeare, are enough for it. That I will not dispute. But no other poets so well show to the poetry of the present the way it must take; no other poets have lived so much by the imaginative reason; no other poets have made their work so well balanced; no other poets, who have so well satisfied the thinking-power, have so well satisfied the religious sense:—

"Oh! that my lot may lead me in the path of holy innocence of word and deed, the path which august laws ordain, laws that in the highest empyrean had their birth, of which Heaven is the father alone, neither did the race of mortal men beget them, nor shall oblivion ever put them to sleep. The power of God is mighty in them, and groweth not old."

Let Theocritus or St Francis beat that!

VII

JOUBERT; OR A FRENCH COLERIDGE

Why should we ever treat of any dead authors but the famous ones? Mainly for this reason; because, from these famous personages, home or foreign, whom we all know so well, and of whom so much has been said, the amount of stimulus which they contain for us has been in a great measure disengaged; people have formed their opinion about them, and do not readily change it. One may write of them afresh, combat received opinions about them, even interest one's readers in so doing; but the interest one's readers receive has to do, in general, rather with the treatment than with the subject; they are susceptible of a lively impression rather of the course of the discussion itself,—its turns, vivacity, and novelty,—than of the genius of the author who is the occasion of it. And yet, what is really precious and inspiring, in all that we get from literature, except this sense of an immediate contact with genius itself, and the stimulus towards what is true and excellent which we derive from it? Now in literature, besides the eminent men of genius who have had their deserts in the way of fame, besides the eminent men of ability who have often had far more than their deserts in the way of fame, there are a certain number of personages who have been real men of genius,—by which we mean, that they have had a genuine organ for what is true and excellent, and are therefore capable of emitting a life-giving stimulus,—but who, for some reason or other, in most cases for very valid reasons, have remained obscure, nay, beyond a narrow circle in their own country, unknown. It is salutary from time to time to come across a genius of this kind, and to extract his honey. Often he has more of it for us, as we have already said, than greater men; for, though it is by no means true that from what is new to us there is most to be learnt, it is yet indisputably true that from what is new to us we in general learn most.

Of a genius of this kind, Joseph Joubert, we are now going to speak. His name is, we believe, almost unknown in England; and even in France, his native country, it is not famous. M. Sainte-Beuve has given of him one of his incomparable portraits; but,—besides that even M. Sainte-Beuve's writings are far less known amongst us than they deserve to be,—every country has its own point of view from which a remarkable author may most profitably be seen and studied.

Joseph Joubert was born (and his date should be remarked) in 1754, at Montignac, a little town in Périgord. His father was a doctor with small means and a large family; and Joseph, the eldest, had his own way to make in the world. He was for eight years, as pupil first, and afterwards as an assistant-master, in the public school of Toulouse, then managed by the Jesuits, who seem to have left in him a most favourable opinion, not only of their tact and address, but of their really good qualities as teachers and directors. Compelled by the weakness of his health to give up, at twenty-two, the profession of teaching, he passed two important years of his life in hard study, at home at Montignac; and came in 1778 to try his fortune in the literary world of Paris, then perhaps the most tempting field which has ever yet presented itself to a young man of letters. He knew Diderot, D'Alembert, Marmontel, Laharpe; he became intimate with one of the celebrities of the next literary generation, then, like himself, a young man,—Chateaubriand's friend, the future Grand Master of the University, Fontanes. But, even then, it began to be remarked of him, that M. Joubert "*s'inquiétait de perfection bien plus que de gloire*—cared far more about perfecting himself than about making himself a reputation." His severity of morals may perhaps have been rendered easier to him by the delicacy of his health; but the delicacy of his health will not by itself account for his changeless preference of being to seeming, knowing to showing, studying to publishing; for what terrible public performers have some invalids been! This preference he retained all through his life, and it is by this that he is characterised. "He has chosen," Chateaubriand (adopting Epicurus's famous words) said of him, "*to* *hide his life.*" Of a life which its owner was bent on hiding there can be but little to tell. Yet the only two public incidents of Joubert's life, slight as they are, do all concerned in them so much credit that they deserve mention. In 1790 the Constituent Assembly made the office of justice of the peace elective throughout France. The people of Montignac retained such an impression of the character of their young townsman,—one of Plutarch's men of virtue, as he had lived amongst them, simple, studious, severe,—that, though he had left them for years, they elected him in his absence without his knowing anything about it. The appointment little suited Joubert's wishes or tastes; but at such a moment he thought it wrong to decline it. He held it for two years, the legal term, discharging its duties with a firmness and integrity which were long remembered; and then, when he went out of office, his fellow-townsmen re-elected him. But Joubert thought that he had now accomplished his duty towards them, and he went back to the retirement which he loved. That seems to me a little episode of the great French Revolution worth remembering. The sage who was asked by the king, why sages were seen at the doors of kings, but not kings at the doors of sages, replied, that it was because sages knew what was good for them, and kings did not. But at Montignac the king—for in 1790 the people in France was king with a vengeance—knew what was good for him, and came to the door of the sage.

The other incident was this. When Napoleon, in 1809, reorganised the public instruction of France, founded the University, and made M. de Fontanes its Grand Master, Fontanes had to submit to the Emperor a list of persons to form the council or governing body of the new University. Third on his list, after two distinguished names Fontanes placed the unknown name of Joubert. "This name," he said in his accompanying memorandum to the Emperor, "is not known as the two first are; and yet this is the nomination to which I attach most importance. I have known M. Joubert all my life. His character and intelligence are of the very highest order. I shall rejoice if your Majesty will accept my guarantee for him." Napoleon trusted his Grand Master, and Joubert became a councillor of the University. It is something that a man, elevated to the highest posts of State, should not forget his obscure friends; or that, if he remembers and places them, he should regard in placing them their merit rather than their obscurity. It is more, in the eyes of those whom the necessities, real or supposed, of a political system have long familiarised with such cynical disregard of fitness in the distribution of office, to see a minister and his master alike zealous, in giving away places, to give them to the best men to be found.

Between 1792 and 1809 Joubert had married. His life was passed between Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, where his wife's family lived,—a pretty little Burgundian town, by which the Lyons railroad now passes,—and Paris. Here, in a house in the Rue St.-Honoré, in a room very high up, and admitting plenty of the light which he so loved,—a room from which he saw, in his own words, "a great deal of sky and very little earth,"—among the treasures of a library collected with infinite pains, taste, and skill, from which every book he thought ill of was rigidly excluded,—he never would possess either a complete Voltaire or a complete Rousseau,—the happiest hours of his life were passed. In the circle of one of those women who leave a sort of perfume in literary history, and who have the gift of inspiring successive generations of readers with an indescribable regret not to have known them,—Pauline de Montmorin, Madame de Beaumont,—he had become intimate with nearly all which at that time, in the Paris world of letters or of society, was most attractive and promising. Amongst his acquaintances one only misses the names of Madame de Staël and Benjamin Constant; neither of them was to his taste, and with Madame de Staël he always refused to become acquainted; he thought she had more vehemence than truth, and more heat than light. Years went on, and his friends became conspicuous authors or statesmen; but Joubert remained in the shade. His constitution was of such fragility that how he lived so long, or accomplished so much as he did, is a wonder: his soul had, for its basis of operations, hardly any body at all: both from his stomach and from his chest he seems to have had constant suffering, though he lived by rule, and was as abstemious as a Hindoo. Often, after overwork in thinking, reading, or talking, he remained for days together in a state of utter prostration,—condemned to absolute silence and inaction; too happy if the agitation of his mind would become quiet also, and let him have the repose of which he stood in so much need. With this weakness of health, these repeated suspensions of energy, he was incapable of the prolonged contention of spirit necessary for the creation of great works; but he read and thought immensely; he was an unwearied note-taker, a charming letter-writer; above all, an excellent and delightful talker. The gaiety and amenity of his natural disposition were inexhaustible; and his spirit, too, was of astonishing elasticity; he seemed to hold on to life by a single thread only, but that single thread was very tenacious. More and more, as his soul and knowledge ripened more and more, his friends pressed to his room in the Rue St.-Honoré; often he received them in bed, for he seldom rose before three o'clock in the afternoon; and at his bedroom-door, on his bad days, Madame Joubert stood sentry, trying, not always with success, to keep back the thirsty comers from the fountain which was forbidden to flow. Fontanes did nothing in the University without consulting him, and Joubert's ideas and pen were always at his friend's service. When he was in the country, at Villeneuve, the young priests of his neighbourhood used to resort to him, in order to profit by his library and by his conversation. He, like our Coleridge, was particularly qualified to attract men of this kind and to benefit them: retaining perfect independence of mind, he was religious; he was a religious philosopher. As age came on, his infirmities became more and more overwhelming; some of his friends, too, died; others became so immersed in politics, that Joubert, who hated politics, saw them seldomer than of old; but the moroseness of age and infirmity never touched him, and he never quarrelled with a friend or lost one. From these miseries he was preserved by that quality in him of which we have already spoken; a quality which is best expressed by a word, not of common use in English,—alas, we have too little in our national character of the quality which this word expresses,—his inborn, his constant amenity. He lived till the year 1824. On the 4th of May in that year he died, at the age of seventy. A day or two after his death M. de Chateaubriand inserted in the *Journal des Débats* a short notice of him, perfect for its feeling, grace, and propriety. *On ne vit dans la mémoire du monde*, he says and says truly, *que par des travaux pour le monde*,—"a man can live in the world's memory only by what he has done for the world." But Chateaubriand used the privilege which his great name gave him to assert, delicately but firmly, Joubert's real and rare merits, and to tell the world what manner of man had just left it.

Joubert's papers were accumulated in boxes and drawers. He had not meant them for publication; it was very difficult to sort them and to prepare them for it. Madame Joubert, his widow, had a scruple about giving them a publicity which her husband, she felt, would never have permitted. But, as her own end approached, the natural desire to leave of so remarkable a spirit some enduring memorial, some memorial to outlast the admiring recollection of the living who were so fast passing away, made her yield to the entreaties of his friends, and allow the printing, but for private circulation only, of a volume of his fragments. Chateaubriand edited it; it appeared in 1838, fourteen years after Joubert's death. The volume attracted the attention of those who were best fitted to appreciate it, and profoundly impressed them. M. Sainte-Beuve gave of it, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, the admirable notice of which we have already spoken; and so much curiosity was excited about Joubert, that the collection of his fragments, enlarged by many additions, was at last published for the benefit of the world in general. It has since been twice reprinted. The first or preliminary chapter has some fancifulness and affectation in it; the reader should begin with the second.

We have likened Joubert to Coleridge; and, indeed the points of resemblance between the two men are numerous. Both of them great and celebrated talkers, Joubert attracting pilgrims to his upper chamber in the Rue St.-Honoré, as Coleridge attracted pilgrims to Mr Gilman's at Highgate; both of them desultory and incomplete writers,—here they had an outward likeness with one another. Both of them passionately devoted to reading in a class of books, and to thinking on a class of subjects, out of the beaten line of the reading and thought of their day; both of them ardent students and critics of old literature, poetry, and the metaphysics of religion; both of them curious explorers of words, and of the latent significance hidden under the popular use of them; both of them, in a certain sense, conservative in religion and politics, by antipathy to the narrow and shallow foolishness of vulgar modern liberalism; —here they had their inward and real likeness. But that in which the essence of their likeness consisted is this,—that they both had from nature an ardent impulse for seeking the genuine truth on all matters they thought about, and an organ for finding it and recognising it when it was found. To have the impulse for seeking this truth is much rarer than most people think; to have the organ for finding it is, we need not say, very rare indeed. By this they have a spiritual relationship of the closest kind with one another, and they become, each of them, a source of stimulus and progress for all of us.

Coleridge had less delicacy and penetration than Joubert, but more richness and power; his production, though far inferior to what his nature at first seemed to promise, was abundant and varied. Yet in all his production how much is there to dissatisfy us! How many reserves must be made in praising either his poetry, or his criticism, or his philosophy! How little either of his poetry, or of his criticism, or of his philosophy, can we expect permanently to stand! But that which will stand of Coleridge is this: the stimulus of his continual effort,—not a moral effort, for he had no morals,—but of his continual instinctive effort, crowned often with rich success, to get at and to lay bare the real truth of his matter in hand, whether that matter were literary, or philosophical, or political, or religious; and this in a country where at that moment such an effort was almost unknown; where the most powerful minds threw themselves upon poetry, which conveys truth, indeed, but conveys it indirectly; and where ordinary minds were so habituated to do without thinking altogether, to regard considerations of established routine and practical convenience as paramount, that any attempt to introduce within the domain of these the disturbing element of thought they were prompt to resent as an outrage. Coleridge's great usefulness lay in his supplying in England, for many years and under critical circumstances, by the spectacle of this effort of his, a stimulus to all minds, in the generation which grew up around him, capable of profiting by it; his action will still be felt as long as the need for it continues; when, with the cessation of the need, the action too has ceased, Coleridge's memory, in spite of the disesteem—nay, repugnance—which his character may and must inspire, will yet for ever remain invested with that interest and gratitude which invests the memory of founders.

M. de Rémusat, indeed, reproaches Coleridge with his *jugements saugrenus;* the criticism of a gifted truth-finder ought not to be *saugrenu*, so on this reproach we must pause for a moment. *Saugrenu* is a rather vulgar French word, but, like many other vulgar words, very expressive; used as an epithet for a judgment, it means something like *impudently absurd.* The literary judgments of one nation about another are very apt to be *saugrenus;* it is certainly true, as M. Sainte-Beuve remarks in answer to Goethe's complaint against the French that they have undervalued Du Bartas, that as to the estimate of its own authors every nation is the best judge; the *positive* estimate of them, be it understood, not, of course, the estimate of them in comparison with the authors of other nations. Therefore, a foreigner's judgments about the intrinsic merit of a nation's authors will generally, when at complete variance with that nation's own, be wrong; but there is a permissible wrongness in these matters, and to that permissible wrongness there is a limit. When that limit is exceeded, the wrong judgment becomes more than wrong, it becomes *saugrenu*, or impudently absurd. For instance, the high estimate which the French have of Racine is probably in great measure deserved; or, to take a yet stronger case, even the high estimate which Joubert had of the Abbé Delille is probably in great measure deserved; but the common disparaging judgment passed on Racine by English readers is not *saugrenu*, still less is that passed by them on the Abbé Delille *saugrenu*, because the beauty of Racine, and of Delille too, so far as Delille's beauty goes, is eminently in their language, and this is a beauty which a foreigner cannot perfectly seize;—this beauty of diction, *apicibus verborum ligata*, as M. Saint-Beuve, quoting Quintilian, says of Chateaubriand's. As to Chateaubriand himself, again, the common English judgment, which stamps him as a mere shallow rhetorician, all froth and vanity, is certainly wrong, one may even wonder that we English should judge Chateaubriand so wrongly, for his power goes far beyond beauty of diction; it is a power, as well, of passion and sentiment, and this sort of power the English can perfectly well appreciate. One production of Chateaubriand's, *René*, is akin to the most popular productions of Byron,—to the *Childe Harold* or *Manfred*,—in spirit, equal to them in power, superior to them in form. But this work, we hardly know why, is almost unread in England. And only let us consider this criticism of Chateaubriand's on the true pathetic: "It is a dangerous mistake, sanctioned, like so many other dangerous mistakes, by Voltaire, to suppose that the best works of imagination are those which draw most tears. One could name this or that melodrama, which no one would like to own having written, and which yet harrows the feelings far more than the *Æneid*. The true tears are those which are called forth by the *beauty* of poetry; there must be as much admiration in them as sorrow. They are the tears which come to our eyes when Priam says to Achilles, *ἔτλην δ', οἷ' οὔπω . . .*—'And I have endured,—the like whereof no soul upon the earth hath yet endured,—to carry to my lips the hand of him who slew my child;' or when Joseph cries out: 'I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.'" Who does not feel that the man who wrote that was no shallow rhetorician, but a born man of genius, with the true instinct of genius for what is really admirable? Nay, take these words of Chateaubriand, an old man of eighty, dying, amidst the noise and bustle of the ignoble revolution of February 1848: "Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, quand donc, quand donc serai-je délivré de tout ce monde, ce bruit; quand donc, quand donc cela finira-t-il?" Who, with any ear, does not feel that those are not the accents of a trumpery rhetorician, but of a rich and puissant nature,—the cry of the dying lion? We repeat it, Chateaubriand is most ignorantly underrated in England; and the English are capable of rating him far more correctly if they knew him better. Still Chateaubriand has such real and great faults, he falls so decidedly beneath the rank of the truly greatest authors, that the depreciatory judgment passed on him in England, though ignorant and wrong, can hardly be said to transgress the limits of permissible ignorance; it is not a *jugement saugrenu*. But when a critic denies genius to a literature which has produced Bossuet and Molière, he passes the bounds; and Coleridge's judgments on French literature and the French genius are undoubtedly, as M. de Rémusat calls them, *saugrenus.*

And yet, such is the impetuosity of our poor human nature, such its proneness to rush to a decision with imperfect knowledge, that his having delivered a *saugrenu* judgment or two in his life by no means proves a man not to have had, in comparison with his fellow-men in general, a remarkable organ for truth, or disqualifies him for being, by virtue of that organ, a source of vital stimulus for us. Joubert had far less smoke and turbid vehemence in him than Coleridge; he had also a far keener sense of what was absurd. But Joubert can write to M. Molé (the M. Molé who was afterwards Louis Philippe's well-known minister): "As to your Milton, whom the merit of the Abbé Delille" (the Abbé Delille translated *Paradise Lost*) "makes me admire, and with whom I have nevertheless still plenty of fault to find, why, I should like to know, are you scandalised that I have not enabled myself to read him? I don't understand the language in which he writes, and I don't much care to. If he is a poet one cannot put up with, even in the prose of the younger Racine, am I to blame for that? If by force you mean beauty manifesting itself with power, I maintain that the Abbé Delille has more force than Milton." That, to be sure, is a petulant outburst in a private letter; it is not, like Coleridge's, a deliberate proposition in a printed philosophical essay. But is it possible to imagine a more perfect specimen of a *saugrenu* judgment? It is even worse than Coleridge's, because it is *saugrenu* with reasons. That, however, does not prevent Joubert from having been really a man of extraordinary ardour in the search for truth, and of extraordinary fineness in the perception of it; and so was Coleridge.

Joubert had around him in France an atmosphere of literary, philosophical, and religious opinion as alien to him as that in England was to Coleridge. This is what makes Joubert, too, so remarkable, and it is on this account that we begged the reader to remark his date. He was born in 1754; he died in 1824. He was thus in the fulness of his powers at the beginning of the present century, at the epoch of Napoleon's consulate. The French criticism of that day—the criticism of Laharpe's successors, of Geoffroy and his colleagues in the *Journal des Débats*—had a dryness very unlike the telling vivacity of the early Edinburgh reviewers, their contemporaries, but a fundamental narrowness, a want of genuine insight, much on a par with theirs. Joubert, like Coleridge, had no respect for the dominant oracle; he treats his Geoffroy with about as little deference as Coleridge treats his Jeffrey. "Geoffroy," he says in an article in the *Journal des Débats* criticising Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme*—"Geoffroy in this article begins by holding out his paw prettily enough; but he ends by a volley of kicks, which lets the whole world see but too clearly the four iron shoes of the four-footed animal." There is, however, in France a sympathy with intellectual activity for its own sake, and for the sake of its inherent pleasurableness and beauty, keener than any which exists in England; and Joubert had more effect in Paris,—though his conversation was his only weapon, and Coleridge wielded besides his conversation his pen,—than Coleridge had or could have in London. We mean, a more immediate, appreciable effect; an effect not only upon the young and enthusiastic, to whom the future belongs, but upon formed and important personages to whom the present belongs, and who are actually moving society. He owed this partly to his real advantages over Coleridge. If he had, as we have already said, less power and richness than his English parallel, he had more tact and penetration. He was more *possible* than Coleridge; his doctrine was more intelligible than Coleridge's, more receivable. And yet with Joubert, the striving after a consummate and attractive clearness of expression came from no mere frivolous dislike of labour and inability for going deep, but was a part of his native love of truth and perfection. The delight of his life he found in truth, and in the satisfaction which the enjoying of truth gives to the spirit; and he thought the truth was never really and worthily said, so long as the least cloud, clumsiness, and repulsiveness hung about the expression of it.

Some of his best passages are those in which he upholds this doctrine. Even metaphysics he would not allow to remain difficult and abstract: so long as they spoke a professional jargon, the language of the schools, he maintained,—and who shall gainsay him?—that metaphysics were imperfect; or, at any rate, had not yet reached their ideal perfection.

"The true science of metaphysics," he says, "consists not in rendering abstract that which is sensible, but in rendering sensible that which is abstract; apparent that which is hidden; imaginable, if so it may be, that which is only intelligible; and intelligible, finally, that which an ordinary attention fails to seize."

And therefore

"distrust, in books on metaphysics, words which have not been able to get currency in the world, and are only calculated to form a special language."

Nor would he suffer common words to be employed in a special sense by the schools:—

"Which is the best, if one wants to be useful and to be really understood, to get one's words in the world, or to get them in the schools. I maintain that the good plan is to employ words in their popular sense rather than in their philosophical sense; and the better plan still, to employ them in their natural sense rather than in their popular sense. By their natural sense, I mean the popular and universal acceptation of them brought to that which in this is essential and invariable. To prove a thing by definition proves nothing, if the definition is purely philosophical; for such definitions only bind him who makes them. To prove a thing by definition, when the definition expresses the necessary, inevitable, and clear idea which the world at large attaches to the object, is, on the contrary, all in all; because then what one does is simply to show people what they do really think, in spite of themselves and without knowing it. The rule that one is free to give to words what sense one will, and that the only thing needful is to be agreed upon the sense one gives them, is very well for the mere purposes of argumentation, and may be allowed in the schools where this sort of fencing is to be practised; but in the sphere of the true-born and noble science of metaphysics, and in the genuine world of literature, it is good for nothing. One must never quit sight of realities, and one must employ one's expressions simply as media, —as glasses, through which one's thoughts can be best made evident. I know, by my own experience, how hard this rule is to follow; but I judge of its importance by the failure of every system of metaphysics. Not one of them has succeeded; for the simple reason, that in every one ciphers have been constantly used instead of values, artificial ideas instead of native ideas, jargon instead of idiom."

We do not know whether the metaphysician will ever adopt Joubert's rules; but we are sure that the man of letters, whenever he has to speak of metaphysics, will do well to adopt them. He, at any rate, must remember

"it is by means of familiar words that style takes hold of the reader and gets possession of him. It is by means of these that great thoughts get currency and pass for true metal, like gold and silver which have had a recognised stamp put upon them. They beget confidence in the man who, in order to make his thoughts more clearly perceived, uses them; for people feel that such an employment of the language of common human life betokens a man who knows that life and its concerns, and who keeps himself in contact with them. Besides, these words make a style frank and easy. They show that an author has long made the thought or the feeling expressed his mental food; that he has so assimilated them and familiarised them, that the most common expressions suffice him in order to express ideas which have become every-day ideas to him by the length of time they have been in his mind. And lastly, what one says in such words looks more true; for, of all the words in use, none are so clear as those which we call common words; and clearness is so eminently one of the characteristics of truth, that often it even passes for truth itself."

These are not, in Joubert, mere counsels of rhetoric; they come from his accurate sense of perfection, from his having clearly seized the fine and just idea that beauty and light are properties of truth, and that truth is incompletely exhibited if it is exhibited without beauty and light.

"Be profound with clear terms and not with obscure terms. What is difficult will at last become easy; but as one goes deep into things, one must still keep a charm, and one must carry into these dark depths of thought, into which speculation has only recently penetrated, the pure and antique clearness of centuries less learned than ours, but with more light in them."

And elsewhere he speaks of those "spirits, lovers of light, who, when they have an idea to put forth, brood long over it first, and wait patiently till it *shines*, as Buffon enjoined, when he defined genius to be the aptitude for patience; spirits who know by experience that the driest matter and the dullest words hide within them the germ and spark of some brightness, like those fairy nuts in which were found diamonds if one broke the shell and was the right person; spirits who maintain that, to see and exhibit things in beauty, is to see and show things as in their essence they really are, and not as they exist for the eye of the careless, who do not look beyond the outside; spirits hard to satisfy, because of a keen-sightedness in them, which makes them discern but too clearly both the models to be followed and those to be shunned; spirits active though meditative, who cannot rest except in solid truths, and whom only beauty can make happy; spirits far less concerned for glory than for perfection, who, because their art is long and life is short, often die without leaving a monument, having had their own inward sense of life and fruitfulness for their best reward."

No doubt there is something a little too ethereal in all this, something which reminds one of Joubert's physical want of body and substance; no doubt, if a man wishes to be a great author, it is "to consider too curiously, to consider" as Joubert did—it is a mistake to spend so much of one's time in setting up one's ideal standard of perfection, and in contemplating it. Joubert himself knew this very well: "I cannot build a house for my ideas," said he; "I have tried to do without words, and words take their revenge on me by their difficulty." "If there is a man upon earth tormented by the cursed desire to get a whole book into a page, a whole page into a phrase, and this phrase into one word,—that man is myself." "I can sow but I cannot build." Joubert, however, makes no claim to be a great author; by renouncing all ambition to be this, by not trying to fit his ideas into a house, by making no compromise with words in spite of their difficulty, by being quite single-minded in his pursuit of perfection, perhaps he is enabled to get closer to the truth of the objects of his study, and to be of more service to us by setting before us ideals, than if he had composed a celebrated work. We doubt whether, in an elaborate work on the philosophy of religion, he would have got his ideas about religion to *shine*, to use his own expression, as they shine when he utters them in perfect freedom. Penetration in these matters is valueless without soul, and soul is valueless without penetration; both of these are delicate qualities, and, even in those who have them, easily lost; the charm of Joubert is, that he has and keeps both.

"One should be fearful of being wrong in poetry when one thinks differently from the poets, and in religion when one thinks differently from the saints.

"There is a great difference between taking for idols Mahomet and Luther, and bowing down before Rousseau and Voltaire. People at any rate imagined they were obeying God when they followed Mahomet, and the Scriptures when they hearkened to Luther. And perhaps one ought not too much to disparage that inclination which leads mankind to put into the hands of those whom it thinks the friends of God the direction and government of his heart and mind. It is the subjection to irreligious spirits which alone is fatal, and, in the fullest sense of the word, depraving.

"May I say it? It is not hard to know God, provided one will not force oneself to define him.

"Do not bring into the domain of reasoning that which belongs to our innermost feeling. State truths of sentiment, and do not try to prove them. There is a danger in such proofs; for in arguing it is necessary to treat that which is in question as something problematic: now that which we accustom ourselves to treat as problematic ends by appearing to us as really doubtful. In things that are visible and palpable, never prove what is believed already; in things that are certain and mysterious,—mysterious by their greatness and by their nature,—make people believe them, and do not prove them; in things that are matters of practice and duty, command, and do not explain. 'Fear God,' has made many men pious; the proofs of the existence of God has made many men atheists. From the defiance springs the attack; the advocate begets in his hearer a wish to pick holes; and men are almost always led on, from the desire to contradict the doctor, to the desire to contradict the doctrine. Make truth lovely, and do not try to arm her; mankind will then be far less inclined to contend with her.

"Why is even a bad preacher almost always heard by the pious with pleasure? *Because he talks to them about what they love.* But you who have to expound religion to the children of this world, you who have to speak to them of that which they once loved perhaps, or which they would be glad to love,—remember that they do not love it yet, and to make them love it take heed to speak with power.

"You may do what you like, mankind will believe no one but God; and he only can persuade mankind who believes that God has spoken to him. No one can give faith unless he has faith; the persuaded persuade, as the indulgent disarm.

"The only happy people in the world are the good man, the sage, and the saint; but the saint is happier than either of the others, so much is man by his nature formed for sanctity."

The same delicacy and penetration which he here shows in speaking of the inward essence of religion, Joubert shows also in speaking of its outward form, and of its manifestation in the world:—

"Piety is not a religion, though it is the soul of all religions. A man has not a religion simply by having pious inclinations, any more than he has a country simply by having philanthropy. A man has not a country until he is a citizen in a state, until he undertakes to follow and uphold certain laws, to obey certain magistrates, and to adopt certain ways of living and acting.

"Religion is neither a theology nor a theosophy; it is more than all this; it is a discipline, a law, a yoke, an indissoluble engagement."

Who, again, has ever shown with more truth and beauty the good and imposing side of the wealth and splendour of the Catholic Church, than Joubert in the following passage?—

"The pomps and magnificence with which the Church is reproached are in truth the result and the proof of her incomparable excellence. From whence, let me ask, have come this power of hers and these excessive riches, except from the enchantment into which she threw all the world? Ravished with her beauty, millions of men from age to age kept loading her with gifts, bequests, cessions. She had the talent of making herself loved, and the talent of making men happy. It is that which wrought prodigies for her; it is from thence that she drew her power."

"She had the talent of making herself *feared*,"—one should add that too, in order to be perfectly just; but Joubert, because he is a true child of light, can see that the wonderful success of the Catholic Church must have been due really to her good rather than to her bad qualities; to her making herself loved rather than to her making herself feared.

How striking and suggestive, again, is this remark on the Old and New Testaments:—

"The Old Testament teaches the knowledge of good and evil; the Gospel, on the other hand, seems written for the predestinated; it is the book of innocence. The one is made for earth, the other seems made for heaven. According as the one or the other of these books takes hold of a nation, what may be called the *religious humours* of nations differ."

So the British and North American Puritans are the children of the Old Testament, as Joachim of Flora and St Francis are the children of the New. And does not the following maxim exactly fit the Church of England, of which Joubert certainly never thought when he was writing it?—"The austere sects excite the most enthusiasm at first; but the temperate sects have always been the most durable."

And these remarks on the Jansenists and Jesuits, interesting in themselves, are still more interesting because they touch matters we cannot well know at first-hand, and which Joubert, an impartial observer, had had the means of studying closely. We are apt to think of the Jansenists as having failed by reason of their merits; Joubert shows us how far their failure was due to their defects:—

"We ought to lay stress upon what is clear in Scripture, and to pass quickly over what is obscure; to light up what in Scripture is troubled, by what is serene in it; what puzzles and checks the reason, by what satisfies the reason. The Jansenists have done just the reverse. They lay stress upon what is uncertain, obscure, afflicting, and they pass lightly over all the rest; they eclipse the luminous and consoling truths of Scripture, by putting between us and them its opaque and dismal truths. For example, 'Many are called;' there is a clear truth: 'Few are chosen;' there is an obscure truth. 'We are children of wrath;' there is a sombre, cloudy, terrifying truth: 'We are all the children of God;' 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;' there are truths which are full of clearness, mildness, serenity, light. The Jansenists trouble our cheerfulness, and shed no cheering ray on our trouble. They are not, however, to be condemned for what they say, because what they say is true; but they are to be condemned for what they fail to say, for that is true too,—truer, even, than the other; that is, its truth is easier for us to seize, fuller, rounder, and more complete. Theology, as the Jansenists exhibit her, has but the half of her disk."

Again:—

"The Jansenists erect 'grace' into a kind of fourth person of the Trinity. They are, without thinking or intending it, Quaternitarians. St Paul and St Augustine, too exclusively studied, have done all the mischief. Instead of 'grace,' say help, succour, a divine influence, a dew of heaven; then one can come to a right understanding. The word 'grace' is a sort of talisman, all the baneful spell of which can be broken by translating it. The trick of personifying words is a fatal source of mischief in theology."

Once more:—

"The Jansenists tell men to love God; the Jesuits make men love him. The doctrine of these last is full of loosenesses, or if you will, of errors; still,—singular as it may seem, it is undeniable,—they are the better directors of souls.

"The Jansenists have carried into religion more thought than the Jesuits, and they go deeper; they are faster bound with its sacred bonds. They have in their way of thinking an austerity which incessantly constrains the will to keep the path of duty; all the habits of their understanding, in short, are more Christian. But they seem to love God without affection, and solely from reason, from duty, from justice. The Jesuits, on the other hand, seem to love him from pure inclination; out of admiration, gratitude, tenderness; for the pleasure of loving him, in short. In their books of devotion you find joy, because with the Jesuits nature and religion go hand in hand. In the books of the Jansenists there is a sadness and a moral constraint, because with the Jansenists religion is for ever trying to put nature in bonds."

The Jesuits have suffered, and deservedly suffered, plenty of discredit from what Joubert gently calls their "loosenesses;" let them have the merit of their amiability.

The most characteristic thoughts one can quote from any writer are always his thoughts on matters like these; but the maxims of Joubert on purely literary subjects also, have the same purged and subtle delicacy; they show the same sedulousness in him to preserve perfectly true the balance of his soul. Let us begin with this, which contains a truth too many people fail to perceive:—

"Ignorance, which in matters of morals extenuates the crime, is itself, in matters of literature, a crime of the first order."

And here is another sentence, worthy of Goethe, to clear the air at one's entrance into the region of literature:—

"With the fever of the senses, the delirium of the passions, the weakness of the spirit; with the storms of the passing time and with the great scourges of human life,—hunger, thirst, dishonour, diseases, and death,—authors may as long as they like go on making novels which shall harrow our hearts; but the soul says all the while, 'You hurt me.'"

And again:—

"Fiction has no business to exist unless it is more beautiful than reality. Certainly the monstrosities of fiction may be found in the booksellers' shops; you buy them there for a certain number of francs, and you talk of them for a certain number of days; but they have no place in literature, because in literature the one aim of art is the beautiful. Once lose sight of that, and you have the mere frightful reality."

That is just the right criticism to pass on these "monstrosities:" *they have no place in literature*, and those who produce them are not really men of letters. One would think that this was enough to deter from such production any man of genuine ambition. But most of us, alas! are what we must be, not what we ought to be,—not even what we know we ought to be.

The following, of which the first part reminds one of Wordsworth's sonnet, "If thou indeed derive thy light from heaven," excellently defines the true salutary function of literature, and the limits of this function:—

"Whether one is an eagle or an ant, in the intellectual world, seems to me not to matter much; the essential thing is to have one's place marked there, one's station assigned, and to belong decidedly to a regular and wholesome order. A small talent, if it keeps within its limits and rightly fulfils its task, may reach the goal just as well as a greater one. To accustom mankind to pleasures which depend neither upon the bodily appetites nor upon money, by giving them a taste for the things of the mind, seems to me, in fact, the one proper fruit which nature has meant our literary productions to have. When they have other fruits, it is by accident, and, in general, not for good. Books which absorb our attention to such a degree that they rob us of all fancy for other books, are absolutely pernicious. In this way they only bring fresh crotchets and sects into the world; they multiply the great variety of weights, rules, and measures already existing; they are morally and politically a nuisance."

Who can read these words and not think of the limiting effect exercised by certain works in certain spheres and for certain periods; exercised even by the works of men of genius or virtue,—by the works of Rousseau, the works of Wesley, the works of Swedenborg? And what is it which makes the Bible so admirable a book, to be the one book of those who can have only one, but the miscellaneous character of the contents of the Bible?

Joubert was all his life a passionate lover of Plato; we hope other lovers of Plato will forgive us for saying that their adored object has never been more truly described than he is here:—

"Plato shows us nothing, but he brings brightness with him; he puts light into our eyes, and fills us with a clearness by which all objects afterwards become illuminated. He teaches us nothing; but he prepares us, fashions us, and makes us ready to know all. Somehow or other, the habit of reading him augments in us the capacity for discerning and entertaining whatever fine truths may afterwards present themselves. Like mountain-air, it sharpens our organs, and gives us an appetite for wholesome food."

"Plato loses himself in the void" (he says again); "but one sees the play of his wings, one hears their rustle." And the conclusion is: "It is good to breathe his air, but not to live upon him."

As a pendant to the criticism on Plato, this on the French moralist Nicole is excellent:—

"Nicole is a Pascal without style. It is not what he says which is sublime, but what he thinks; he rises, not by the natural elevation of his own spirit, but by that of his doctrines. One must not look to the form in him, but to the matter, which is exquisite. He ought to be read with a direct view of practice."

English people have hardly ears to hear the praises of Bossuet, and the Bossuet of Joubert is Bossuet at his very best; but this is a far truer Bossuet than the "declaimer" Bossuet of Lord Macaulay, himself a born rhetorician, if ever there was one:—

"Bossuet employs all our idioms, as Homer employed all the dialects. The language of kings, of statesmen, and of warriors; the language of the people and of the student; of the country and of the schools, of the sanctuary and of the courts of law; the old and the new, the trivial and the stately, the quiet and the resounding,—he turns all to his use; and out of all this he makes a style, simple, grave, majestic. His ideas are, like his words, varied,—common and sublime together. Times and doctrines in all their multitude were ever before his spirit, as things and words in all their multitude were ever before it. He is not so much a man as a human nature, with the temperance of a saint, the justice of a bishop, the prudence of a doctor, and the might of a great spirit."

After this on Bossuet, we must quote a criticism on Racine, to show that Joubert did not indiscriminately worship all the French gods of the grand century:—

"Those who find Racine enough for them are poor souls and poor wits; they are souls and wits which have never got beyond the callow and boarding-school stage. Admirable, as no doubt he is, for his skill in having made poetical the most humdrum sentiments and the most middling sort of passions, he can yet stand us in stead of nobody but himself. He is a superior writer; and, in literature, that at once puts a man on a pinnacle. But he is not an inimitable writer."

And again: "The talent of Racine is in his works, but Racine himself is not there. That is why he himself became disgusted with them." "Of Racine, as of his ancients, the genius lay in taste. His elegance is perfect, but it is not supreme, like that of Virgil." And, indeed, there is something *supreme* in an elegance which exercises such a fascination as Virgil's does; which makes one return to his poems again and again, long after one thinks one has done with them; which makes them one of those books that, to use Joubert's words, "lure the reader back to them, as the proverb says good wine lures back the wine-bibber." And the highest praise Joubert can at last find for Racine is this, that he is the Virgil of the ignorant;—"*Racine est le Virgile des ignorants.*"

Of Boileau, too, Joubert says; "Boileau is a powerful poet, but only in the world of half poetry." How true is that of Pope also! And he adds: "Neither Boileau's poetry nor Racine's flows from the fountainhead." No Englishman, controverting the exaggerated French estimate of these poets, could desire to use fitter words.

We will end with some remarks on Voltaire and Rousseau, remarks in which Joubert eminently shows his prime merit as a critic,—the soundness and completeness of his judgments. We mean that he has the faculty of judging with all the powers of his mind and soul at work together in due combination; and how rare is this faculty! how seldom is it exercised towards writers who so powerfully as Voltaire and Rousseau stimulate and call into activity a single side in us!

"Voltaire's wits came to their maturity twenty years sooner than the wits of other men, and remained in full vigour thirty years longer. The charm which our style in general gets from our ideas, his ideas get from his style. Voltaire is sometimes afflicted, sometimes strongly moved; but serious he never is. His very graces have an effrontery about them. He had correctness of judgment, liveliness of imagination, nimble wits, quick taste, and a moral sense in ruins. He is the most debauched of spirits, and the worst of him is that one gets debauched along with him. If he had been a wise man, and had had the self-discipline of wisdom, beyond a doubt half his wit would have been gone; it needed an atmosphere of *licence* in order to play freely.

Those people who read him every day, create for themselves, by an invincible law, the necessity of liking him. But those people who, having given up reading him, gaze steadily down upon the influences which his spirit has shed abroad, find themselves in simple justice and duty compelled to detest him. It is impossible to be satisfied with him, and impossible not to be fascinated by him."

The literary sense in us is apt to rebel against so severe a judgment on such a charmer of the literary sense as Voltaire, and perhaps we English are not very liable to catch Voltaire's vices, while of some of his merits, we have signal need; still, as the real definitive judgment on Voltaire, Joubert's is undoubtedly the true one. It is nearly identical with that of Goethe. Joubert's sentence on Rousseau is in some respects more favourable:—

"That weight in the speaker (*auctoritas*) which the ancients talk of, is to be found in Bossuet more than in any other French author; Pascal, too, has it, and La Bruyère; even Rousseau has something of it, but Voltaire not a particle. I can understand how a Rousseau—I mean a Rousseau cured of his faults—might at the present day do much good, and may even come to be greatly wanted; but under no circumstances can a Voltaire be of any use."

The peculiar power of Rousseau's style has never been better hit off than in the following passage:—

"Rousseau imparted, if I may so speak, *bowels of feeling* to the words he used (*donna des entrailles à tous les mots*), and poured into them such a charm, sweetness so penetrating, energy so puissant, that his writings have an effect upon the soul something like that of those illicit pleasures which steal away our taste and intoxicate our reason."

The final judgment, however, is severe, and justly severe:—

"Life without actions; life entirely resolved into affections and half-sensual thoughts; do-nothingness setting up for a virtue; cowardliness with voluptuousness; fierce pride with nullity underneath it; the strutting phrase of the most sensual of vagabonds, who has made his system of philosophy and can give it eloquently forth: there is Rousseau! A piety in which there is no religion; a severity which brings corruption with it; a dogmatism which serves to ruin all authority: there is Rousseau's philosophy! To all tender, ardent, and elevated natures, I say: Only Rousseau can detach you from religion, and only true religion can cure you of Rousseau."

We must yet find room, before we end, for one at least of Joubert's sayings on political matters; here, too, the whole man shows himself; and here, too, his affinity with Coleridge is very remarkable. How true, how true in France especially, is this remark on the contrasting direction taken by the aspirations of the community in ancient and in modern states:—

"The ancients were attached to their country by three things,—their temples, their tombs, and their forefathers. The two great bonds which united them to their government were the bonds of habit and antiquity. With the moderns, hope and the love of novelty have produced a total change. The ancients said *our forefathers*, we say *posterity*: we do not, like them, love our *patria*, that is to say, the country and the laws of our fathers, rather we love the laws and the country of our children; the charm we are most sensible to is the charm of the future, and not the charm of the past."

And how keen and true is this criticism on the changed sense of the word "liberty":—

"A great many words have changed their meaning. The word *liberty*, for example, had a bottom among the ancients the same meaning as the word *dominion*. *I would be free* meant, in the mouth of the ancient, *I would take part in governing or administering the State*; in the mouth of a modern it means, *I would be independent*. The word *liberty* has with us a moral sense; with them its sense was purely political."

Joubert had lived through the French Revolution, and to the modern cry for liberty he was prone to answer:—

"Let your cry be for free souls rather even than for free men. Moral liberty is the one vitally important liberty, the one liberty which is indispensable; the other liberty is good and salutary only so far as it favours this. Subordination is in itself a better thing than independence. The one implies order and arrangement; the other implies only self-sufficiency with isolation. The one means harmony, the other a single tone; the one is the whole, the other is but the part."

"Liberty! liberty!" he cries again; "in all things let us have *justice*, and then we shall have enough liberty."

Let us have justice, *and then we shall have enough liberty!* The wise man will never refuse to echo those words; but then, such is the imperfection of human governments, that almost always, in order to get justice, one has first to secure liberty.

We do not hold up Joubert as a very astonishing and powerful genius, but rather as a delightful and edifying genius. We have not cared to exhibit him as a sayer of brilliant epigrammatic things, such things as "Notre vie est du vent tissu . . . les dettes abrégent la vie . . . celui qui a de l'imagination sans érudition a des ailes et n'a pas de pieds (*Our life is woven wind . . . debts take from life . . . the man of imagination without learning has wings and no feet*)," though for such sayings he is famous. In the first place, the French language is in itself so favourable a vehicle for such sayings, that the making them in it has the less merit; at least half the merit ought to go, not to the maker of the saying, but to the French language. In the second place, the peculiar beauty of Joubert is not there; it is not in what is exclusively intellectual,—it is in the union of *soul* with intellect, and in the delightful, satisfying result which this union produces. "Vivre, c'est penser et sentir son âme . . . le bonheur est de sentir son âme bonne . . . toute vérité nue et crue n'a pas assez passé par l'âme . . . les hommes ne sont justes qu'envers ceux qu'ils aiment (*The essence of life lies in thinking and being conscious of one's soul . . . happiness is the sense of one's soul being good . . . if a truth is nude and crude, that is a proof it has not been steeped long enough in the soul; . . . man cannot even be just to his neighbour, unless he loves him*);" it is much rather in sayings like these that Joubert's best and innermost nature manifests itself. He is the most prepossessing and convincing of witnesses to the good of loving light. Because he sincerely loved light, and did not prefer to it any little private darkness of his own, he found light; his eye was single, and therefore his whole body was full of light. And because he was full of light, he was also full of happiness. In spite of his infirmities, in spite of his sufferings, in spite of his obscurity, he was the happiest man alive; his life was as charming as his thoughts. For certainly it is natural that the love of light, which is already, in some measure, the possession of light, should irradiate and beatify the whole life of him who has it. There is something unnatural and shocking where, as in the case of Joubert's English parallel, it does not. Joubert pains us by no such contradiction; "the same penetration of spirit which made him such delightful company to his friends, served also to make him perfect in his own personal life, by enabling him always to perceive and do what was right;" he loved and sought light till he became so habituated to it, so accustomed to the joyful testimony of a good conscience, that, to use his own words, "he could no longer exist without this, and was obliged to live without reproach if he would live without misery."

Joubert was not famous while he lived, and he will not be famous now that he is dead. But, before we pity him for this, let us be sure what we mean, in literature, by *famous*. There are the famous men of genius in literature,—the Homers, Dantes, Shakspeares: of them we need not speak; their praise is for ever and ever. Then there are the famous men of ability in literature: their praise is in their own generation. And what makes this difference? The work of the two orders of men is at the bottom the same,—*a criticism of life*. The end and aim of all literature, if one considers it attentively, is, in truth, nothing but that. But the criticism which the men of genius pass upon human life is permanently acceptable to mankind; the criticism which the men of ability pass upon human life is transitorily acceptable. Between Shakspeare's criticism of human life and Scribe's the difference is there;—the one is permanently acceptable, the other transitorily. Why then, we repeat, this difference? It is that the acceptableness of Shakspeare's criticism depends upon its inherent truth: the acceptableness of Scribe's upon its suiting itself, by its subject-matter, ideas, mode of treatment, to the taste of the generation that hears it. But the taste and ideas of one generation are not those of the next. This next generation in its turn arrives;—first its sharpshooters, its quick-witted, audacious light troops; then the elephantine main body. The imposing array of its predecessor it confidently assails, riddles it with bullets, passes over its body. It goes hard then with many once popular reputations, with many authorities once oracular. Only two kinds of authors are safe in the general havoc. The first kind are the great abounding fountains of truth, whose criticism of life is a source of illumination and joy to the whole human race for ever,—the Homers, the Shakspeares. These are the sacred personages, whom all civilised warfare respects. The second are those whom the out-skirmishers of the new generation, its forerunners,—quick-witted soldiers, as we have said, the select of the army,—recognise, though the bulk of their comrades behind might not, as of the same family and character with the sacred personages, exercising like them an immortal function, and like them inspiring a permanent interest. They snatch them up, and set them in a place of shelter, where the on-coming multitude may not overwhelm them. These are the Jouberts. They will never, like the Shakspeares, command the homage of the multitude; but they are safe; the multitude will not trample them down. Except these two kinds, no author is safe. Let us consider, for example, Joubert's famous contemporary, Lord Jeffrey. All his vivacity and accomplishment avail him nothing; of the true critic he had in an eminent degree no quality, except one,—curiosity. Curiosity he had, but he had no organ for truth; he cannot illuminate and rejoice us; no intelligent out-skirmisher of the new generation cares about him, cares to put him in safety; at this moment we are all passing over his body. Let us consider a greater than Jeffrey, a critic whose reputation still stands firm,—will stand, many people think, for ever,—the great apostle of the Philistines, Lord Macaulay. Lord Macaulay was, as we have already said, a born rhetorician; a splendid rhetorician doubtless, and, beyond that, an *English* rhetorician also, an *honest* rhetorician; still, beyond the apparent rhetorical truth of things he never could penetrate; for their vital truth, for what the French call the *vraie vérité*, he had absolutely no organ; therefore his reputation, brilliant as it is, is not secure. Rhetoric so good as his excites and gives pleasure; but by pleasure alone you cannot permanently bind men's spirits to you. Truth illuminates and gives joy, and it is by the bond of joy, not of pleasure, that men's spirits are indissolubly held. As Lord Macaulay's own generation dies out, as a new generation arrives, without those ideas and tendencies of its predecessor which Lord Macaulay so deeply shared and so happily satisfied, will he give the same pleasure? and, if he ceases to give this, has he enough of light in him to make him safe? Pleasure the new generation will get from its own novel ideas and tendencies; but light is another and a rarer thing, and must be treasured wherever it can be found. Will Macaulay be saved, in the sweep and pressure of time, for his light's sake, as Johnson has already been saved by two generations, Joubert by one? We think it very doubtful. But for a spirit of any delicacy and dignity, what a fate, if he could foresee it! to be an oracle for one generation, and then of little or no account for ever. How far better, to pass with scant notice through one's own generation, but to be singled out and preserved by the very iconoclasts of the next, then in their turn by those of the next, and so, like the lamp of life itself, to be handed on from generation to generation in safety! This is Joubert's lot, and it is a very enviable one. The new men of the new generations, while they let the dust deepen on a thousand Laharpes, will say of him: "He lived in the Philistines' day, in a place and time when almost every idea current in literature had the mark of Bel and Dagon upon it, and not the mark of the children of light. Nay, the children of light were as yet hardly so much as heard of: the Canaanite was then in the land. Still, there were even then a few, who, nourished on some secret tradition, or illumined, perhaps, by a divine inspiration, kept aloof from the reigning superstitions, never bowed the knee to the gods of Canaan; and one of these few was called *Joubert.*"

VIII

A WORD MORE ABOUT SPINOZA

"By the sentence of the angels, by the decree of the saints, we anathematise, cut off, curse, and execrate Baruch Spinoza, in the presence of these sacred books with the six hundred and thirteen precepts which are written therein, with the anathema wherewith Joshua anathematised Jericho; with the cursing wherewith Elisha cursed the children; and with all the cursings which are written in the Book of the Law: cursed be he by day, and cursed by night; cursed when he lieth down, and cursed when he riseth up; cursed when he goeth out, and cursed when he cometh in; the Lord pardon him never; the wrath and fury of the Lord burn upon this man, and bring upon him all the curses which are written in the Book of the Law. The Lord blot out his name under heaven. The Lord set him apart for destruction from all the tribes of Israel, with all the curses of the firmament which are written in the Book of this Law. . . . There shall no man speak to him, no man write to him, no man show him any kindness, no man stay under the same roof with him, no man come nigh him."

With these amenities, the current compliments of theological parting, the Jews of the Portuguese synagogue at Amsterdam took in 1656 (and not in 1660, as has till now been commonly supposed) their leave of their erring brother, Baruch or Benedict Spinoza. They remained children of Israel, and he became a child of modern Europe.

That was in 1656, and Spinoza died in 1677, at the early age of forty-four. Glory had not found him out. His short life—a life of unbroken diligence, kindliness, and purity—was passed in seclusion. But in spite of that seclusion, in spite of the shortness of his career, in spite of the hostility of the dispensers of renown in the 18th century,—of Voltaire's disparagement and Bayle's detraction,—in spite of the repellent form which he has given to his principal work, in spite of the exterior semblance of a rigid dogmatism alien to the most essential tendencies of modern philosophy, in spite, finally, of the immense weight of disfavour cast upon him by the long-repeated charge of atheism, Spinoza's name has silently risen in importance, the man and his work have attracted a steadily increasing notice, and bid fair to become soon what they deserve to become,—in the history of modern philosophy, the central point of interest. An avowed translation of one of his works,—his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* of which I spoke here some months ago,—has at last made its appearance in English. It is the principal work which Spinoza published in his lifetime; his book on ethics, the work on which his fame rests, is posthumous.

The English translator has not done his task well. Of the character of his version there can, I am afraid, be no doubt; one such passage as the following is decisive:—

"I confess that, *while with them* (the theologians) *I have never been able sufficiently to admire the unfathomed mysteries of Scripture, I have still found them giving utterance to nothing but Aristotelian and Platonic speculations*, artfully dressed up and cunningly accommodated to Holy Writ, lest the speakers should show themselves too plainly to belong to the sect of the Grecian heathens. *Nor was it enough for these men to discourse with the Greeks; they have further taken to raving with the Hebrew prophets.*"

This professes to be a translation of these words of Spinoza: "Fateor, eos nunquam satis mirari potuisse Scripturæ profundissima mysteria; attamen præter Aristotelicorum vel Platonicorum speculationes nihil docuisse video, atque his, ne gentiles sectari viderentur, Scripturam accommodaverunt. Non satis his fuit cum Graecis insanire, sed prophetas cum iisdem deliravisse voluerunt." After one such specimen of a translator's force, the experienced reader has a sort of instinct that he may as well close the book at once, with a smile or a sigh, according as he happens to be a follower of the weeping or of the laughing philosopher. If, in spite of this instinct, he persists in going on with the English version of the *Tractatus Theo-*

logico-Politicus, he will find many more such specimens. It is not, however, my intention to fill my space with these, or with strictures upon their author. I prefer to remark, that he renders a service to literary history by pointing out, in his preface, how "to Bayle may be traced the disfavour in which the name of Spinoza was so long held;" that, in his observations on the system of the Church of England, he shows a laudable freedom from the prejudices of ordinary English Liberals of that advanced school to which he clearly belongs; and lastly, that, though he manifests little familiarity with Latin, he seems to have considerable familiarity with philosophy, and to be well able to follow and comprehend speculative reasoning. Let me advise him to unite his forces with those of some one who has that accurate knowledge of Latin which he himself has not, and then, perhaps, of that union a really good translation of Spinoza will be the result. And, having given him this advice, let me again return, for a little, to the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* itself.

This work, as I have already said, is a work on the interpretation of Scripture,—it treats of the Bible. What was it exactly which Spinoza thought about the Bible and its inspiration? That will be, at the present moment, the central point of interest for the English readers of his Treatise. Now I wish to observe—what it was irrelevant to my purpose to observe when I before spoke of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*—that just on this very point the Treatise, interesting and remarkable as it is, will fail to satisfy the reader. It is important to seize this notion quite firmly, and not to quit hold of it while one is reading Spinoza's work. The scope of that work is this. Spinoza sees that the life and practice of Christian nations professing the religion of the Bible, are not the due fruits of the religion of the Bible; he sees only hatred, bitterness, and strife, where he might have expected to see love, joy, and peace in believing; and he asks himself the reason of this. The reason is, he says, that these people misunderstand their Bible. Well, then, is his conclusion, I will write a *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. I will show these people, that, taking the Bible for granted, taking it to be all which it asserts itself to be, taking it to have all the authority which it claims, it is not what they imagine it to be, it does not say what they imagine it to say. I will show them what it really does say, and I will show them that they will do well to accept this real teaching of the Bible, instead of the phantom with which they have so long been cheated. I will show their Governments that they will do well to remodel the National Churches, to make of them institutions informed with the spirit of the true Bible, instead of institutions informed with the spirit of this false phantom.

Such is really the scope of Spinoza's work. He pursues a great object, and pursues it with signal ability; but it is important to observe that he does not give us his own opinion about the Bible's fundamental character. He takes the Bible as it stands, as he might take the phenomena of nature, and he discusses it as he finds it. Revelation differs from natural knowledge, he says, not by being more divine or more certain than natural knowledge, but by being conveyed in a different way; it differs from it because it is a knowledge "of which the laws of human nature considered in themselves alone cannot be the cause." What is really its cause, he says, we need not here inquire (*verum nec nobis jam opus est propheticæ cognitionis causam scire*), for we take Scripture, which contains this revelation, as it stands, and do not ask how it arose (*documentorum causas nihil curamus*).

Proceeding on this principle, Spinoza leaves the attentive reader somewhat baffled and disappointed, clear as is his way of treating his subject, and remarkable as are the conclusions with which he presents us. He starts, we feel, from what is to him a hypothesis, and we want to know what he really thinks about this hypothesis. His greatest novelties are all within limits fixed for him by this hypothesis. He says that the voice which called Samuel was an imaginary voice; he says that the waters of the Red Sea retreated before a strong wind; he says that the Shunammite's son was revived by the natural heat of Elisha's body; he says that the rainbow which was made a sign to Noah appeared in the ordinary course of nature. Scripture itself, rightly interpreted, says, he affirms, all this. But he asserts that the Voice which uttered the commandments on Mount Sinai was a real voice, a *vera vox*. He says, indeed, that this voice could not really give to the Israelites that proof which they imagined it gave to them of the existence of God, and that God on Sinai was dealing with the Israelites only according to their imperfect knowledge. Still he asserts the voice to have been a real one; and for this reason, that we do violence to Scripture if we do not admit it to have been a real one (*nisi Scripturæ vim inferre velimus, omnino concedendum est, Israëlitas veram vocem audivisse*). The attentive reader wants to know what Spinoza himself thought about this *vera vox* and its possibility; he is much more interested in knowing this than in knowing what Spinoza considered Scripture to affirm about the matter.

The feeling of perplexity thus caused is not diminished by the language of the chapter on miracles. In this chapter Spinoza broadly affirms a miracle to be an impossibility. But he himself contrasts the method of demonstration *à priori*, by which he claims to have established this proposition, with the method which he has pursued in treating of prophetic revelation. "This revelation," he says, "is a matter out of human reach, and therefore I was bound to take it as I found it." *Monere volo, me aliâ prorsus methodo circa miracula processisse, quam circa prophetiam . . . quod etiam consulto feci, quia de prophetiâ, quandoquidem ipsa captum humanum superat et quæstio mere theologica est, nihil affirmare, neque etiam scire poteram in quo ipsa potissimum constiterit, nisi ex fundamentis revelatis.* The reader feels that Spinoza, proceeding on a hypothesis, has presented him with the assertion of a miracle, and afterwards, proceeding *à priori*, has presented him with the assertion that a miracle is impossible. He feels that Spinoza does not adequately reconcile these two assertions by declaring that any event really miraculous, if found recorded in Scripture, must be "a spurious addition made to Scripture by sacrilegious men." Is, then, he asks, the *vera vox* of Mount Sinai in Spinoza's opinion a spurious addition made to Scripture by sacrilegious men; or, if not, how is it not miraculous?

Spinoza, in his own mind, regarded the Bible as a vast collection of miscellaneous documents, many of them quite disparate and not at all to be harmonised with others: documents of unequal value and of varying applicability, some of them conveying ideas salutary for one time, others for another. But in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* he by no means always deals in this free spirit with the Bible.

Sometimes he chooses to deal with it in the spirit of the veriest worshipper of the letter; sometimes he chooses to treat the Bible as if all its parts were (so to speak) equipollent; to snatch an isolated text which suits his purpose, without caring whether it is annulled by the context, by the general drift of Scripture, or by other passages of more weight and authority. The great critic thus voluntarily becomes as uncritical as Exeter Hall. The epicurean Solomon, whose *Ecclesiastes* the Hebrew doctors, even after they had received it into the canon, forbade the young and weak-minded among their community to read, Spinoza quotes as of the same authority with the severe Moses; he uses promiscuously, as documents of identical force, without discriminating between their essentially different character, the softened cosmopolitan teaching of the prophets of the captivity and the rigid national teaching of the instructors of Israel's youth. He is capable of extracting, from a chance expression of Jeremiah, the assertion of a speculative idea which Jeremiah certainly never entertained, and from which he would have recoiled in dismay,—the idea, namely, that miracles are impossible; just as the ordinary Englishman can extract from God's words to Noah, *Be fruitful and multiply*, an exhortation to himself to have a large family. Spinoza, I repeat, knew perfectly well what this verbal mode of dealing with the Bible was worth: but he sometimes uses it because of the hypothesis from which he set out; because of his having agreed "to take Scripture as it stands, and not to ask how it arose."

No doubt the sagacity of Spinoza's rules for biblical interpretation, the power of his analysis of the contents of the Bible, the interest of his reflections on Jewish history, are, in spite of this, very great, and have an absolute worth of their own, independent of the silence or ambiguity of their author upon a point of cardinal importance. Few candid people will read his rules of interpretation without exclaiming that they are the very dictates of good sense, that they have always believed in them; and without adding, after a moment's reflection, that they have passed their lives in violating them. And what can be more interesting, than to find that perhaps the main cause of the decay of the Jewish polity was one of which from our English Bible, which entirely mistranslates the 26th verse of the 20th chapter of Ezekiel, we hear nothing,—the perpetual reproach of impurity and rejection cast upon the mass of the Hebrew nation by the exclusive priesthood of the tribe of Levi? What can be more suggestive, after Mr Mill and Dr Stanley have been telling us how great an element of strength to the Hebrew nation was the institution of prophets, than to hear from the ablest of Hebrews how this institution seems to him to have been to his nation one of her main elements of weakness? No intelligent man can read the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* without being profoundly instructed by it: but neither can he read it without feeling that, as a speculative work, it is, to use a French military expression, *in the air;* that, in a certain sense, it is in want of a base and in want of supports; that this base and these supports are, at any rate, not to be found in the work itself, and, if they exist, must be sought for in other works of the author.

The genuine speculative opinions of Spinoza, which the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* but imperfectly reveals, may in his Ethics and in his Letters be found set forth clearly. It is, however, the business of criticism to deal with every independent work as with an independent whole, and—instead of establishing between the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* and the Ethics of Spinoza a relation which Spinoza himself has not established,—to seize, in dealing with the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, the important fact that this work has its source, not in the axioms and definition of the Ethics, but in a hypothesis. The Ethics are not yet translated into English, and I have not here to speak of them. Then will be the right time for criticism to try and seize the special character and tendencies of that remarkable work, when it is dealing with it directly. The criticism of the Ethics is far too serious a task to be undertaken incidentally, and merely as a supplement to the criticism of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. Nevertheless, on certain governing ideas of Spinoza, which receive their systematic expression, indeed, in the Ethics, and on which the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* is not formally based, but which are yet never absent from Spinoza's mind in the composition of any work, which breathe through all his works, and fill them with a peculiar effect and power, I wish before concluding these remarks, to say a few words.

A philosopher's real power over mankind resides not in his metaphysical formulas, but in the spirit and tendencies which have led him to adopt those formulas. Spinoza's critic, therefore, has rather to bring to light that spirit and those tendencies of his author, than to exhibit his metaphysical formulas. Propositions about substance pass by mankind at large like the idle wind, which mankind at large regards not; it will not even listen to a word about these propositions, unless it first learns what their author was driving at with them, and finds that this object of his is one with which it sympathises, one, at any rate, which commands its attention. And mankind is so far right that this object of the author is really, as has been said, that which is most important, that which sets all his work in motion, that which is the secret of his attraction for other minds, which, by different ways, pursue the same object.

Mr Maurice, seeking for the cause of Goethe's great admiration for Spinoza, thinks that he finds it in Spinoza's Hebrew genius. "He spoke of God," says Mr Maurice, "as an actual being, to those who had fancied him a name in a book. The child of the circumcision had a message for Lessing and Goethe which the pagan schools of philosophy could not bring." This seems to me, I confess, fanciful. An intensity and impressiveness, which came to him from his Hebrew nature, Spinoza no doubt has; but the two things which are most remarkable about him, and by which, as I think, he chiefly impressed Goethe, seem to me not to come to him from his Hebrew nature at all,—I mean his denial of final causes, and his stoicism, a stoicism not passive, but active. For a mind like Goethe's, —a mind profoundly impartial and passionately aspiring after the science, not of men only, but of universal nature,—the popular philosophy which explains all things by reference to man, and regards universal nature as existing for the sake of man, and even of certain classes of men, was utterly repulsive. Unchecked, this philosophy would gladly maintain that the donkey exists in order that the invalid Christian may have donkey's milk before breakfast; and such views of nature as this were exactly what Goethe's whole soul abhorred. Creation, he thought, should be made of sterner stuff; he desired to rest the donkey's existence on larger grounds. More than any philosopher who has ever lived, Spinoza satisfied him here. The full exposition of the counter-doctrine to the popular doctrine of final causes is to be found in the Ethics; but this denial of final causes was so essential an element of all Spinoza's thinking that we shall, as has been said already, find it in the work with which we are here concerned, the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, and, indeed, permeating that work and all his works. From the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* one may take as good a general statement of this denial as any which is to be found in the Ethics :—

"Deus naturam dirigit, prout ejus leges universales, non autem prout humanæ naturæ particulares leges exigunt, adeoque Deus non solius humani generis, sed totius naturæ rationem habet. (*God directs nature, according as the universal laws of nature, but not according as the particular laws of human nature require ; and so God has regard, not of the human race only, but of entire nature.*)"

And, as a pendant to this denial by Spinoza of final causes, comes his stoicism :—

"Non studemus, ut natura nobis, sed contra ut nos naturæ pareamus. (*Our desire is not that nature may obey us, but, on the contrary that we may obey nature.*)"

Here is the second source of his attractiveness for Goethe; and Goethe is but the eminent representative of a whole order of minds whose admiration has made Spinoza's fame. Spinoza first impresses Goethe and any man like Goethe, and then he composes him; first he fills and satisfies his imagination by the width and grandeur of his view of nature, and then he fortifies and stills his mobile, straining, passionate poetic temperament by the moral lesson he draws from his view of nature. And a moral lesson not of mere resigned acquiescence, not of melancholy quietism, but of joyful activity within the limits of man's true sphere :—

"Ipsa hominis essentia est conatus quo unusquis que suum esse conservare conatur. . . . Virtus hominis est ipsa hominis essentia, quatenus a solo conatu suum esse conservandi definitur. . . . Felicitas in eo consistit quod homo suum esse conservare potest. . . . Lætitia est hominis transitio ad majorem perfectionem. . . . Tristitia est hominis transitio ad minorem perfectionem. (*Man's very essence is the effort wherewith each man strives to maintain his own being. . . . Man's virtue is this very essence, so far as it is defined by this* *single effort to maintain his own being. . . . Happiness consists in a man's being able to maintain his own being. . . . Joy is man's passage to a greater perfection. . . . Sorrow is man's passage to a lesser perfection.)*"

It seems to me that by neither of these, his grand characteristic doctrines, is Spinoza truly Hebrew or truly Christian. His denial of final causes is essentially alien to the spirit of the Old Testament, and his cheerful and self-sufficing stoicism is essentially alien to the spirit of the New. The doctrine that "God directs nature, not according as the particular laws of human nature, but according as the universal laws of nature require," is at utter variance with that Hebrew mode of representing God's dealings, which makes the locusts visit Egypt to punish Pharaoh's hardness of heart, and the falling dew avert itself from the fleece of Gideon. The doctrine that "all sorrow is a passage to a lesser perfection" is at utter variance with the Christian recognition of the blessedness of sorrow, working "repentance to salvation not to be repented of;" of sorrow, which, in Dante's words, "remarries us to God." Spinoza's repeated and earnest assertions that the love of God is man's *summum bonum* do not remove the fundamental diversity between his doctrine and the Hebrew and Christian doctrines. By the love of God he does not mean the same thing as the Hebrew and Christian religions mean by the love of God. He makes the love of God to consist in the knowledge of God; and, as we know God only through his manifestation of himself in the laws of all nature, it is by knowing these laws that we love God, and the more we know them the more we love him. This may be true, but this is not what the Christian means by the love of God. Spinoza's ideal is the intellectual life; the Christian's ideal is the religious life. Between the two states there is all the difference which there is between the being in love, and the following, with delighted comprehension, a demonstration of Euclid. For Spinoza, undoubtedly, the crown of the intellectual life is a transport, as for the saint the crown of the religious life is a transport; but the two transports are not the same.

This is true; yet it is true, also, that by thus crowning the intellectual life with a sacred transport, by thus retaining in philosophy, amid the discontented murmurs of all the army of atheism, the name of God, Spinoza maintains a profound affinity with that which is truest in religion, and inspires an indestructible interest. "It is true," one may say to the wise and devout Christian, "Spinoza's conception of beatitude is not yours, and cannot satisfy you, but whose conception of beatitude would you accept as satisfying? Not even that of the devoutest of your fellow-Christians. Fra Angelico, the sweetest and most inspired of devout souls, has given us, in his great picture of the Last Judgment, his conception of beatitude. The elect are going round in a ring on long grass under laden fruit-trees; two of them, more restless than the others, are flying up a battlemented street,—a street blank with all the ennui of the Middle Ages. Across a gulf is visible, for the delectation of the saints, a blazing caldron in which Beelzebub is sousing the damned. This is hardly more your conception of beatitude than Spinoza's is. But 'in my Father's house are many mansions;' only, to reach any one of these mansions, are needed the wings of a genuine sacred transport, of an 'immortal longing.'" These wings Spinoza had; and, because he had them he horrifies a certain school of his admirers by talking of "God" where they talk of "forces," and by talking of "the love of God" where they talk of "a rational curiosity."

One of his admirers, M. Van Vloten, has recently published at Amsterdam a supplementary volume to Spinoza's works, containing the interesting document of Spinoza's sentence of excommunication, from which I have already quoted, and containing, besides, several lately found works alleged to be Spinoza's, which seem to me to be of doubtful authenticity, and, even if authentic, of no great importance. M. Van Vloten (who, let me be permitted to say in passing, writes a Latin which would make one think that the art of writing Latin must be now a lost art in the country of Lipsius) is very anxious that Spinoza's unscientific retention of the name of God should not afflict his readers with any doubts as to his perfect scientific orthodoxy:—

"It is a great mistake," he cries, "to disparage Spinoza as merely one of the dogmatists before Kant. By keeping the name of God, while he did away with his person and character, he has done himself injustice. Those who look to the bottom of things will see, that, long ago as he lived, he had even then reached the point to which the post-Hegelian philosophy and the study of natural science has only just brought our own times. Leibnitz expressed his apprehension lest those who did away with final causes should do away with God at the same time. But it is in his having done away with final causes, *and with God along with them*, that Spinoza's true merit consists."

Now it must be remarked that to use Spinoza's denial of final causes in order to identify him with the Coryphæi of atheism, is to make a false use of Spinoza's denial of final causes, just as to use his assertion of the all-importance of loving God to identify him with the saints would be to make a false use of his assertion of the all-importance of loving God. He is no more to be identified with the post-Hegelian philosophers than he is to be identified with St Augustine. Nay, when M. Van Vloten violently presses the parallel with the post-Hegelians, one feels that the parallel with St Augustine is the far truer one. Compared with the soldier of irreligion M. Van Vloten would have him to be, Spinoza is religious. His own language about himself, about his aspirations and his course, are true; his foot is in the *vera vita*, his eye on the beatific vision.

IX

MARCUS AURELIUS

Mr Mill says, in his book on Liberty, that "Christian morality is in great part merely a protest against paganism; its ideal is negative rather than positive, passive rather than active." He says, that, in certain most important respects, "it falls far below the best morality of the ancients." The object of systems of morality is to take possession of human life, to save it from being abandoned to passion or allowed to drift at hazard, to give it happiness by establishing it in the practice of virtue; and this object they seek to attain by prescribing to human life fixed principles of action, fixed rules of conduct. In its uninspired as well as in its inspired moments, in its days of languor and gloom as well as in its days of sunshine and energy, human life has thus always a clue to follow, and may always be making way towards its goal. Christian morality has not failed to supply to human life aids of this sort. It has supplied them far more abundantly than many of its critics imagine. The most exquisite document after those of the New Testament, of all the documents the Christian spirit has ever inspired,—the *Imitation*,—by no means contains the whole of Christian morality; nay, the disparagers of this morality would think themselves sure of triumphing if one agreed to look for it in the *Imitation* only. But even the *Imitation* is full of passages like these: "Vita sine proposito languida et vaga est;"—"Omni die renovare debemus propositum nostrum, dicentes: nunc hodiè perfectè incipiamus, quia nihil est quod hactenus fecimus;"—"Secundum propositum nostrum est cursus profectûs nostri;"—"Raro etiam unum vitium perfectè vincimus, et ad *quotidianum* profectum non accendimur;"—"Semper aliquid certi proponendum est;"—"Tibi ipsi violentiam frequenter fac:" (*A life without a purpose is a languid, drifting thing;—Every day we ought to renew our purpose,* *saying to ourselves: This day let us make a sound beginning, for what we have hitherto done is nought;—Our improvement is in proportion to our purpose;—We hardly ever manage to get completely rid even of one fault, and do not set our hearts on* daily *improvement;—Always place a definite purpose before thee;—Get the habit of mastering thine inclination.*) These are moral precepts, and moral precepts of the best kind. As rules to hold possession of our conduct, and to keep us in the right course through outward troubles and inward perplexity, they are equal to the best ever furnished by the great masters of morals—Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius.

But moral rules, apprehended as ideas first, and then rigorously followed as laws, are, and must be, for the sage only. The mass of mankind have neither force of intellect enough to apprehend them clearly as ideas, nor force of character enough to follow them strictly as laws. The mass of mankind can be carried along a course full of hardship for the natural man, can be borne over the thousand impediments of the narrow way, only by the tide of a joyful and bounding emotion. It is impossible to rise from reading Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius without a sense of constraint and melancholy, without feeling that the burden laid upon man is well-nigh greater than he can bear. Honour to the sages who have felt this, and yet have borne it! Yet, even for the sage, this sense of labour and sorrow in his march towards the goal constitutes a relative inferiority; the noblest souls of whatever creed, the pagan Empedocles as well as the Christian Paul, have insisted on the necessity of an inspiration, a living emotion, to make moral action perfect; an obscure indication of this necessity is the one drop of truth in the ocean of verbiage with which the controversy on justification by faith has flooded the world. But, for the ordinary man, this sense of labour and sorrow constitutes an absolute disqualification; it paralyses him; under the weight of it, he cannot make way towards the goal at all. The paramount virtue of religion is, that it has *lighted up* morality; that it has supplied the emotion and inspiration needful for carrying the sage along the narrow way perfectly, for carrying the ordinary man along it at all. Even the religions with most dross in them have had something of this virtue; but the Christian religion manifests it with unexampled splendour. "Lead me, Zeus and

Destiny!" says the prayer of Epictetus, "whithersoever I am appointed to go; I will follow without wavering; even though I turn coward and shrink, I shall have to follow all the same." The fortitude of that is for the strong, for the few; even for them the spiritual atmosphere with which it surrounds them is bleak and gray. But, "Let Thy loving spirit lead me forth into the land of righteousness;"—"The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory;"—"Unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings," says the Old Testament; "Born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;"—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;"—"Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world," says the New. The ray of sunshine is there, the glow of a divine warmth;—the austerity of the sage melts away under it, the paralysis of the weak is healed; he who is vivified by it renews his strength; "all things are possible to Him;" "he is a new creature."

Epictetus says: "Every matter has two handles, one of which will bear taking hold of, the other not. If thy brother sin against thee, lay not hold of the matter by this, that he sins against thee; for by this handle the matter will not bear taking hold of. But rather lay hold of it by this, that he is thy brother, thy born mate; and thou wilt take hold of it by what will bear handling." Jesus, being asked whether a man is bound to forgive his brother as often as seven times, answers: "I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven." Epictetus here suggests to the reason grounds for forgiveness of injuries which Jesus does not; but it is vain to say that Epictetus is on that account a better moralist than Jesus, if the warmth, the emotion, of Jesus's answer fires His hearer to the practice of forgiveness of injuries, while the thought in Epictetus's leaves him cold. So with Christian morality in general: its distinction is not that it propounds the maxim, "Thou shalt love God and thy neighbour," with more development, closer reasoning, truer sincerity, than other moral systems; it is that it propounds this maxim with an inspiration which wonderfully catches the hearer and makes him act upon it. It is because Mr Mill has attained to the perception of truths of this nature, that he is,—instead of being, like the school from which he proceeds, doomed to sterility,—a writer of distinguished mark and influence, a writer deserving all attention and respect; it is (I must be pardoned for saying) because he is not sufficiently leavened with them, that he falls just short of being a great writer.

That which gives to the moral writings of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius their peculiar character and charm, is their being suffused and softened by something of this very sentiment whence Christian morality draws its best power. Mr Long has recently published in a convenient form a translation of these writings, and has thus enabled English readers to judge Marcus Aurelius for themselves; he has rendered his countrymen a real service by so doing. Mr Long's reputation as a scholar is a sufficient guarantee of the general fidelity and accuracy of his translation; on these matters, besides, I am hardly entitled to speak, and my praise is of no value. But that for which I and the rest of the unlearned may venture to praise Mr Long is this; that he treats Marcus Aurelius's writings, as he treats all the other remains of Greek and Roman antiquity which he touches, not as a dead and dry matter of learning, but as documents with a side of modern applicability and living interest, and valuable mainly so far as this side in them can be made clear; that as in his notes on Plutarch's Roman Lives he deals with the modern epoch of Cæsar and Cicero, not as food for schoolboys, but as food for men, and men engaged in the current of contemporary life and action, so in his remarks and essays on Marcus Aurelius he treats this truly modern striver and thinker not as a Classical Dictionary hero, but as a present source from which to draw "example of life, and instruction of manners." Why may not a son of Dr Arnold say, what might naturally here be said by any other critic, that in this lively and fruitful way of considering the men and affairs of ancient Greece and Rome, Mr Long resembles Dr Arnold?

One or two little complaints, however, I have against Mr Long, and I will get them off my mind at once. In the first place, why could he not have found gentler and juster terms to describe the translation of his predecessor, Jeremy Collier,—the redoubtable enemy of stage plays,—than these: "a most coarse and vulgar copy of the original?" As a matter of taste, a translator should deal leniently with his predecessor; but putting that out of the question, Mr Long's language is a great deal too hard. Most English people who knew Marcus Aurelius before Mr Long appeared as his introducer, knew him through Jeremy Collier. And the acquaintance of a man like Marcus Aurelius is such an imperishable benefit, that one can never lose a peculiar sense of obligation towards the man who confers it. Apart from this claim upon one's tenderness, however, Jeremy Collier's version deserves respect for its genuine spirit and vigour, the spirit and vigour of the age of Dryden. Jeremy Collier too, like Mr Long, regarded in Marcus Aurelius the living moralist, and not the dead classic; and his warmth of feeling gave to his style an impetuosity and rhythm which from Mr Long's style (I do not blame it on that account) are absent. Let us place the two side by side. The impressive opening of Marcus Aurelius's fifth book, Mr Long translates thus:—

"In the morning when thou risest unwillingly, let this thought be present: I am rising to the work of a human being. Why then am I dissatisfied if I am going to do the things for which I exist and for which I was brought into the world? Or have I been made for this, to lie in the bedclothes and keep myself warm?—But this is more pleasant.—Dost thou exist then to take any pleasure, and not at all for action or exertion?"

Jeremy Collier has:—

"When you find an unwillingness to rise early in the morning, make this short speech to yourself: 'I am getting up now to do the business of a man; and am I out of humour for going about that which I was made for, and for the sake of which I was sent into the world? Was I then designed for nothing but to doze and batten beneath the counterpane? I thought action had been the end of your being.'"

In another striking passage, again, Mr Long has:—

"No longer wonder at hazard; for neither wilt thou read thy own memoirs, nor the acts of the ancient Romans and Hellenes, and the selections from books which thou wast reserving for thy old age. Hasten then to the end which thou hast before thee, and, throwing away idle hopes, come to thine own aid, if thou carest at all for thyself, while it is in thy power."

Here his despised predecessor has:—

"Don't go too far in your books and overgrasp yourself. Alas, you have no time left to peruse your diary, to read over the Greek and Roman history: come, don't flatter and deceive yourself; look to the main chance, to the end and design of reading, and mind life more than notion: I say, if you have a kindness for your person, drive at the practice and help yourself, for that is in your own power."

It seems to me that here for style and force Jeremy Collier can (to say the least) perfectly stand comparison with Mr Long. Jeremy Collier's real defect as a translator is not his coarseness and vulgarity, but his imperfect acquaintance with Greek; this is a serious defect, a fatal one; it rendered a translation like Mr Long's necessary. Jeremy Collier's work will now be forgotten, and Mr Long stands master of the field; but he may be content, at any rate, to leave his predecessor's grave unharmed, even if he will not throw upon it, in passing, a handful of kindly earth.

Another complaint I have against Mr Long is, that he is not quite idiomatic and simple enough. It is a little formal, at least, if not pedantic, to say *Ethic* and *Dialectic*, instead of *Ethics* and *Dialectics*, and to say "*Hellenes* and Romans" instead of "*Greeks* and Romans." And why, too,—the name of Antoninus being preoccupied by Antoninus Pius,—will Mr Long call his author Marcus *Antoninus* instead of Marcus *Aurelius?* Small as these matters appear, they are important when one has to deal with the general public, and not with a small circle of scholars; and it is the general public that the translator of a short masterpiece on morals, such as is the book of Marcus Aurelius, should have in view; his aim should be to make Marcus Aurelius's work as popular as the *Imitation*, and Marcus Aurelius's name as familiar as Socrates's. In rendering or naming him, therefore, punctilious accuracy of phrase is not so much to be sought as accessibility and currency; everything which may best enable the Emperor and his precepts *volitare per ora virûm*. It is essential to render him in language perfectly plain and unprofessional, and to call him by the name by which he is best and most distinctly known. The translators of the Bible talk of *pence* and not *denarii*, and the admirers of Voltaire do not celebrate him under the name of Arouet.

But, after these trifling complaints are made, one must end, as one began, in unfeigned gratitude to Mr Long for his excellent and substantial reproduction in English of an invaluable work. In general the substantiality, soundness, and precision of Mr Long's rendering are (I cannot but think) as conspicuous as the living spirit with which he treats antiquity; and these qualities are particularly desirable in the translator of a work like that of Marcus Aurelius, of which the language is often corrupt, almost always hard and obscure. Any one who wants to appreciate Mr Long's merits as a translator may read, in the original and in Mr Long's translation, the seventh chapter of the tenth book; he will see how, through all the dubiousness and involved manner of the Greek, Mr Long has firmly seized upon the clear thought which is certainly at the bottom of that troubled wording, and, in distinctly rendering this thought, has at the same time thrown round its expression a characteristic shade of painfulness and difficulty which just suits it. And Marcus Aurelius's book is one which, when it is rendered so accurately as Mr Long renders it, even those who know Greek tolerably well may choose to read rather in the translation than in the original. For not only are the contents here incomparably more valuable than the external form, but this form, the Greek of a Roman, is not exactly one of those styles which have a physiognomy, which are an essential part of their author, which stamp an indelible impression of him on the reader's mind. An old Lyons commentator finds, indeed, in Marcus Aurelius's Greek, something characteristic, something specially firm and imperial; but I think an ordinary mortal will hardly find this: he will find crabbed Greek, without any great charm of distinct physiognomy. The Greek of Thucydides and Plato has this charm, and he who reads them in a translation, however accurate, loses it, and loses much in losing it; but the Greek of Marcus Aurelius, like the Greek of the New Testament, and even more than the Greek of the New Testament, is wanting in it. If one could be assured that the English Testament were made perfectly accurate, one might be almost content never to open a Greek Testament again; and, Mr Long's version of Marcus Aurelius being what it is, an Englishman who reads to live, and does not live to read, may henceforth let the Greek original repose upon its shelf.

The man whose thoughts Mr Long has thus faithfully reproduced, is perhaps the most beautiful figure in history. He is one of those consoling and hope-inspiring marks, which stand for ever to remind our weak and easily discouraged race how high human goodness and perseverance have once been carried, and may be carried again. The interest of mankind is peculiarly attracted by examples of signal goodness in high places; for that testimony to the worth of goodness is the most striking which is borne by those to whom all the means of pleasure and self-indulgence lay open, by those who had at their command the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Marcus Aurelius was the ruler of the grandest of empires; and he was one of the best of men. Besides him, history presents one or two sovereigns eminent for their goodness, such as Saint Louis or Alfred. But Marcus Aurelius has, for us moderns, this great superiority in interest over Saint Louis or Alfred, that he lived and acted in a state of society modern by its essential characteristics, in an epoch akin to our own, in a brilliant centre of civilisation. Trajan talks of "our enlightened age" just as glibly as the *Times* talks of it. Marcus Aurelius thus becomes for us a man like ourselves, a man in all things tempted as we are. Saint Louis inhabits an atmosphere of mediæval Catholicism, which the man of the nineteenth century may admire, indeed, may even passionately wish to inhabit, but which, strive as he will, he cannot really inhabit. Alfred belongs to a state of society (I say it with all deference to the *Saturday Review* critic who keeps such jealous watch over the honour of our Saxon ancestors) half barbarous. Neither Alfred nor Saint Louis can be morally and intellectually as near to us as Marcus Aurelius.

The record of the outward life of this admirable man has in it little of striking incident. He was born at Rome on the 26th of April, in the year 121 of the Christian era. He was nephew and son-in-law to his predecessor on the throne, Antoninus Pius. When Antoninus died, he was forty years old, but from the time of his earliest manhood he had assisted in administering public affairs. Then, after his uncle's death in 161, for nineteen years he reigned as emperor. The barbarians were pressing on the Roman frontier, and a great part of Marcus Aurelius's nineteen years of reign was passed in campaigning. His absences from Rome were numerous and long. We hear of him in Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Greece; but, above all, in the countries on the Danube, where the war with the barbarians was going on,—in Austria Moravia, Hungary. In these countries much of his Journal seems to have been written; parts of it are dated from them; and there, a few weeks before his fifty-ninth birthday, he fell sick and died.[1] The record of him on which his fame chiefly rests is the record of his inward life,—his *Journal*, or *Commentaries*, or *Meditations*, or *Thoughts*, for by all these names has the work been called. Perhaps the most interesting of the records of his outward life is that which the first book of this work supplies, where he gives an account of his education, recites the names of those to whom he is indebted for it, and enumerates his obligations to each of them. It is a refreshing and consoling picture, a priceless treasure for those, who, sick of the "wild and dreamlike trade of blood and guile," which seems to be nearly the whole that history has to offer to our view, seek eagerly for that substratum of right thinking and well-doing which in all ages must surely have somewhere existed, for without it the continued life of humanity would have been impossible. "From my mother I learnt piety and beneficence, and abstinence not only from evil deeds but even from evil thoughts; and further, simplicity in my way of living, far removed from the habits of the rich." Let us remember that, the next time we are reading the sixth satire of Juvenal. "From my tutor I learnt" (hear it, ye tutors of princes!) "endurance of labour, and to want little, and to work with my own hands, and not to meddle with other people's affairs, and not to be ready to listen to slander." The vices and foibles of the Greek sophist or rhetorician—the *Græculus esuriens*—are in everybody's mind; but he who reads Marcus Aurelius's account of his Greek teachers and masters, will understand how it is that, in spite of the vices and foibles of individual *Græculi*, the education of the human race owes to Greece a debt which can never be overrated. The vague and colourless praise of history leaves on the mind hardly any impression of Antoninus Pius: it is only from the private memoranda of his nephew that we learn that a disciplined, hard-working, gentle, wise.

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[1] He died on the 17th of March, A.D. 180.

virtuous man he was; a man who, perhaps, interests mankind less than his immortal nephew only because he has left in writing no record of his inner life,—*caret quia vate sacro*. Of the outward life and circumstances of Marcus Aurelius, beyond these notices which he has himself supplied, there are few of much interest and importance. There is the fine anecdote of his speech when he heard of the assassination of the revolted Avidius Cassius, against whom he was marching; *he was sorry*, he said, *to be deprived of the pleasure of pardoning him*. And there are one or two more anecdotes of him which show the same spirit. But the great record for the outward life of a man who has left such a record of his lofty inward aspirations as that which Marcus Aurelius has left, is the clear consenting voice of all his contemporaries,—high and low, friend and enemy, pagan and Christian,—in praise of his sincerity, justice, and goodness. The world's charity does not err on the side of excess, and here was a man occupying the most conspicuous station in the world, and professing the highest possible standard of conduct;—yet the world was obliged to declare that he walked worthily of his profession. Long after his death, his bust was to be seen in the houses of private men through the wide Roman empire; it may be the vulgar part of human nature which busies itself with the semblance and doings of living sovereigns, it is its nobler part which busies itself with those of the dead; these busts of Marcus Aurelius, in the homes of Gaul, Britain, and Italy, bore witness, not to the inmates' frivolous curiosity about princes and palaces, but to their reverential memory of the passage of a great man upon the earth.

Two things, however, before one turns from the outward to the inward life of Marcus Aurelius, force themselves upon one's notice, and demand a word of comment; he persecuted the Christians, and he had for his son the vicious and brutal Commodus. The persecution at Lyons, in which Attalus and Pothinus suffered, the persecution at Smyrna, in which Polycarp suffered, took place in his reign. Of his humanity, of his tolerance, of his horror of cruelty and violence, of his wish to refrain from severe measures against the Christians, of his anxiety to temper the severity of these measures when they appeared to him indispensable, there is no doubt: but, on the one hand, it is certain that the letter, attributed to him, directing that no Christian should be punished for being a Christian, is spurious; it is almost certain that his alleged answer to the authorities of Lyons, in which he directs that Christians persisting in their profession shall be dealt with according to the law, is genuine. Mr Long seems inclined to try and throw doubt over the persecution at Lyons, by pointing out that the letter of the Lyons Christians relating it, alleges it to have been attended by miraculous and incredible incidents. "A man," he says, "can only act consistently by accepting all this letter or rejecting it all, and we cannot blame him for either." But it is contrary to all experience to say that because a fact is related with incorrect additions, and embellishments, therefore it probably never happened at all; or that it is not, in general, easy for an impartial mind to distinguish between the fact and the embellishments. I cannot doubt that the Lyons persecution took place, and that the punishment of Christians for being Christians was sanctioned by Marcus Aurelius. But then I must add that nine modern readers out of ten, when they read this, will, I believe, have a perfectly false notion of what the moral action of Marcus Aurelius, in sanctioning that punishment, really was. They imagine Trajan, or Antoninus Pius, or Marcus Aurelius, fresh from the perusal of the Gospel, fully aware of the spirit and holiness of the Christian saints ordering their extermination because he loved darkness rather than light. Far from this, the Christianity which these emperors aimed at repressing was, in their conception of it, something philosophically contemptible, politically subversive, and morally abominable. As men, they sincerely regarded it much as well-conditioned people, with us, regard Mormonism; as rulers, they regarded it much as Liberal statesmen, with us, regard the Jesuits. A kind of Mormonism, constituted as a vast secret society, with obscure aims of political and social subversion, was what Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius believed themselves to be repressing when they punished Christians. The early Christian apologists again and again declare to us under what odious imputations the Christians lay, how general was the belief that these imputations were well-grounded, how sincere was the horror which the belief inspired. The multitude, convinced that the Christians were atheists who ate human flesh and thought incest no crime, displayed against them a fury so passionate as to embarrass and alarm their rulers. The severe expressions of Tacitus, *exitiabilis superstitio—odio humani generis convicti*, show how deeply the prejudices of the multitude imbued the educated class also. One asks oneself with astonishment how a doctrine so benign as that of Christ can have incurred misrepresentation so monstrous. The inner and moving cause of the misrepresentation lay, no doubt, in this,—that Christianity was a new spirit in the Roman world, destined to act in that world as its dissolvent; and it was inevitable that Christianity in the Roman world, like democracy in the modern world, like every new spirit with a similar mission assigned to it, should at its first appearance occasion an instinctive shrinking and repugnance in the world which it was to dissolve. The outer and palpable causes of the misrepresentation were, for the Roman public at large, the confounding of the Christians with the Jews, that isolated, fierce, and stubborn race, whose stubbornness, fierceness, and isolation, real as they were, the fancy of a civilised Roman yet further exaggerated; the atmosphere of mystery and novelty which surrounded the Christian rites; the very simplicity of Christian theism; for the Roman statesman, the character of secret assemblages which the meetings of the Christian community wore, under a State-system as jealous of unauthorised associations as the Code Napoleon.

A Roman of Marcus Aurelius's time and position could not well see the Christians except through the mist of these prejudices. Seen through such a mist, the Christians appeared with a thousand faults not their own; but it has not been sufficiently remarked that faults really their own many of them assuredly appeared with besides, faults especially likely to strike such an observer as Marcus Aurelius, and to confirm him in the prejudices of his race, station, and rearing. We look back upon Christianity after it has proved what a future it bore within it, and for us the sole representatives of its early struggles are the pure and devoted spirits through whom it proved this; Marcus Aurelius saw it with its future yet unshown, and with the tares among its professed progeny not less conspicuous than the wheat. Who can doubt that among the professing Christians of the second century, as among the professing

Christians of the nineteenth, there was plenty of folly, plenty of rabid nonsense, plenty of gross fanaticism? who will even venture to affirm that, separated in great measure from the intellect and civilisation of the world for one or two centuries, Christianity, wonderful as have been its fruits, had the development perfectly worthy of its inestimable germ? Who will venture to affirm that, by the alliance of Christianity with the virtue and intelligence of men like the Antonines,—of the best product of Greek and Roman civilisation, while Greek and Roman civilisation had yet life and power,—Christianity and the world, as well as the Antonines themselves, would not have been gainers? That alliance was not to be. The Antonines lived and died with an utter misconception of Christianity; Christianity grew up in the Catacombs, not on the Palatine. Marcus Aurelius incurs no moral reproach by having authorised the punishment of the Christians; he does not thereby become in the least what we mean by a *persecutor*. One may concede that it was impossible for him to see Christianity as it really was;—as impossible as for even the moderate and sensible Fleury to see the Antonines as they really were;—one may concede that the point of view from which Christianity appeared something anti-civil and anti-social, which the State had the faculty to judge and the duty to suppress, was inevitably his. Still, however, it remains true that this sage, who made perfection his aim, and reason his law, did Christianity an immense injustice and rested in an idea of State-attributes which was illusive. And this is, in truth, characteristic of Marcus Aurelius, that he is blameless, yet, in a certain sense, unfortunate; in his character, beautiful as it is, there is something melancholy, circumscribed, and ineffectual.

For of his having such a son as Commodus, too, one must say that he is not to be blamed on that account, but that he is unfortunate. Disposition and temperament are inexplicable things; there are natures on which the best education and example are thrown away; excellent fathers may have, without any fault of theirs, incurably vicious sons. It is to be remembered also, that Commodus was left, at the perilous age of nineteen, master of the world; while his father, at that age, was but beginning a twenty years' apprenticeship to wisdom, labour, and self-command, under the sheltering teachership of his uncle Antoninus. Commodus was a prince apt to be led by favourites; and if the story is true which says that he left, all through his reign, the Christians untroubled, and ascribes this lenity to the influence of his mistress Marcia, it shows that he could be led to good as well as to evil; for such a nature to be left at a critical age with absolute power, and wholly without good counsel and direction, was the more fatal. Still one cannot help wishing that the example of Marcus Aurelius could have availed more with his own only son. One cannot but think that with such virtue as his there should go, too, the ardour which removes mountains, and that the ardour which removes mountains might have even won Commodus; the word *ineffectual* again rises to one's mind; Marcus Aurelius saved his own soul by his righteousness, and he could do no more. Happy they who can do this! but still happier, who can do more!

Yet, when one passes from his outward to his inward life, when one turns over the pages of his *Meditations*,—entries jotted down from day to day, amid the business of the city or the fatigues of the camp, for his own guidance and support, meant for no eye but his own, without the slightest attempt at style, with no care, even, for correct writing, not to be surpassed for naturalness and sincerity,—all disposition to carp and cavil dies away, and one is overpowered by the charm of a character of such purity, delicacy, and virtue. He fails neither in small things nor in great; he keeps watch over himself both that the great springs of action may be right in him, and that the minute details of action may be right also, how admirable in a hard-tasked ruler, and a ruler, too, with a passion for thinking and reading, is such a memorandum as the following:—

"Not frequently nor without necessity to say to any one, or to write in a letter, that I have no leisure; nor continually to excuse the neglect of duties required by our relation to those with whom we live, by alleging urgent occupation."

And, when that ruler is a Roman emperor, what an "idea" is this to be written down and meditated by him:—

"The idea of a polity in which there is the same law for all, a polity administered with regard to equal rights and equal freedom of speech, and the idea of a kingly government which respects most of all the freedom of the governed."

And, for all men who "drive at practice," what practical rules may not one accumulate out of these *Meditations* :—

"The greatest part of what we say or do being unnecessary, if a man takes this away, he will have more leisure and less uneasiness. Accordingly, on every occasion, a man should ask himself: 'Is this one of the unnecessary things?' Now a man should take away not only unnecessary acts, but also unnecessary thoughts, for thus superfluous acts will not follow after."

And again :—

"We ought to check in the series of our thoughts everything that is without a purpose and useless, but most of all the over curious feeling and the malignant; and a man should use himself to think of those things only about which if one should suddenly ask, 'What hast thou now in thy thoughts?' with perfect openness thou mightest immediately answer, 'This or That;' so that from thy words it should be plain that everything in thee is simple and benevolent, and such as befits a social animal, and one that cares not for thoughts about sensual enjoyments, or any rivalry or envy and suspicion, or anything else for which thou wouldst blush if thou shouldst say thou hadst it in thy mind."

So, with a stringent practicalness worthy of Franklin, he discourses on his favourite text, *Let nothing be done without a purpose.* But it is when he enters the region where Franklin cannot follow him, when he utters his thoughts on the ground-motives of human action, that he is most interesting; that he becomes the unique, the incomparable Marcus Aurelius. Christianity uses language very liable to be misunderstood when it seems to tell men to do good, not, certainly, from the vulgar motives of worldly interest, or vanity, or love of human praise, but "that their Father which seeth in secret may reward them openly." The motives of reward and punishment have come, from the misconception of language of this kind, to be strangely overpressed by many Christian moralists, to the deterioration and disfigurement of Christianity. Marcus Aurelius says, truly and nobly :—

"One man, when he has done a service to another, is ready to set it down to his account as a favour conferred.

Another is not ready to do this, but still in his own mind he thinks of the man as his debtor, and he knows what he has done. A third in a manner does not even know what he has done, *but he is like a vine which has produced grapes, and seeks for nothing more after it has once produced its proper fruit.* As a horse when he has run, a dog when he has caught the game, a bee when it has made its honey, so a man when he has done a good act, does not call out for others to come and see, but he goes on to another act, as a vine goes on to produce again the grapes in season. Must a man, then, be one of these, who in a manner acts thus without observing it? Yes."

And again:—

"What more dost thou want when thou hast done a man a service? Art thou not content that thou hast done something conformable to thy nature, and dost thou seek to be paid for it, *just as if the eye demanded a recompense for seeing, or the feet for walking?*"

Christianity, in order to match morality of this strain, has to correct its apparent offers of external reward, and to say: *The kingdom of God is within you.*

I have said that it is by its accent of emotion that the morality of Marcus Aurelius acquires a special character, and reminds one of Christian morality. The sentences of Seneca are stimulating to the intellect; the sentences of Epictetus are fortifying to the character; the sentences of Marcus Aurelius find their way to the soul. I have said that religious emotion has the power to *light up* morality: the emotion of Marcus Aurelius does not quite light up his morality, but it suffuses it; it has not power to melt the clouds of effort and austerity quite away, but it shines through them and glorifies them; it is a spirit, not so much of gladness and elation, as of gentleness and sweetness; a delicate and tender sentiment, which is less than joy and more than resignation. He says that in his youth he learned from Maximus, one of his teachers, "cheerfulness in all circumstances as well as in illness; *and a just admixture in the moral character of sweetness and dignity:*" and it is this very admixture of sweetness with his dignity which makes him so beautiful a moralist. It enables him to carry even into his observation of nature, a delicate penetration, a sympathetic tenderness, worthy of Wordsworth; the spirit of such a remark as the following seems to me to have no parallel in the whole range of Greek and Roman literature :—

"Figs, when they are quite ripe, gape open; and in the ripe olives the very circumstance of their being near to rottenness adds a peculiar beauty to the fruit. And the ears of corn bending down, and the lion's eyebrows, and the foam which flows from the mouth of wild boars, and many other things,—though they are far from being beautiful, in a certain sense,—still, because they come in the course of nature, have a beauty in them, and they please the mind; so that if a man should have a feeling and a deeper insight with respect to the things which are produced in the universe, there is hardly anything which comes in the course of nature which will not seem to him to be in a manner disposed so as to give pleasure."

But it is when his strain passes to directly moral subjects that his delicacy and sweetness lend to it the greatest charm. Let those who can feel the beauty of spiritual refinement read this, the reflection of an emperor who prized mental superiority highly :—

"Thou sayest, 'Men cannot admire the sharpness of thy wits.' Be it so; but there are many other things of which thou canst not say, 'I am not formed for them by nature.' Show those qualities, then, which are altogether in thy power,—sincerity, gravity, endurance of labour, aversion to pleasure, contentment with thy portion and with few things, benevolence, frankness, no love of superfluity, freedom from trifling, magnanimity. Dost thou not see how many qualities thou art at once able to exhibit, as to which there is no excuse of natural incapacity and unfitness, and yet thou still remainest voluntarily below the mark? Or art thou compelled, through being defectively furnished by nature, to murmur, and to be mean, and to flatter, and to find fault with thy poor body, and to try to please men, and to make great display, and to be so restless in thy mind? No, indeed; but thou mightest have been delivered from these things long ago. Only, if in truth thou canst be charged with being rather slow and dull of comprehension, thou must exert thyself about this also, not neglecting nor yet taking pleasure in thy dulness."

The same sweetness enables him to fix his mind, when he sees the isolation and moral death caused by sin, not on the cheerless thought of the misery of this condition, but on the inspiriting thought that man is blest with the power to escape from it :—

"Suppose that thou hast detached thyself from the natural unity,—for thou wast made by nature a part, but now thou hast cut thyself off,—yet here is this beautiful provision, that it is in thy power again to unite thyself. God has allowed this to no other part,—after it has been separated and cut asunder, to come together again. But consider the goodness with which he has privileged man; for he has put it in his power, when he has been separated, to return and to be united and to resume his place."

It enables him to control even the passion for retreat and solitude, so strong in a soul like his, to which the world could offer no abiding city :—

"Men seek retreat for themselves, houses in the country, seashores, and mountains; and thou, too, art wont to desire such things very much. But this is altogether a mark of the most common sort of men, for it is in thy power whenever thou shalt choose to retire into thyself. For nowhere either with more quiet or more freedom from trouble does a man retire than into his own soul, particularly when he has within him such thoughts that by looking into them he is immediately in perfect tranquillity. Constantly, then, give to thyself this retreat, and renew thyself; and let thy principles be brief and fundamental, which, as soon as thou shalt recur to them, will be sufficient to cleanse the soul completely, and to send thee back free from all discontent with the things to which thou returnest."

Against this feeling of discontent and weariness, so natural to the great for whom there seems nothing left to desire or to strive after, but so enfeebling to them, so deteriorating, Marcus Aurelius never ceased to struggle. With resolute thankfulness he kept in remembrance the blessings of his lot; the true blessings of it, not the false :—

"I have to thank Heaven that I was subjected to a ruler and a father (Antoninus Pius) who was able to take away all pride from me, and to bring me to the knowledge that it is possible for a man to live in a palace without either guards, or embroidered dresses, or any show of this kind; but that it is in such a man's power to bring himself very near to the fashion of a private person, without being for this reason either meaner in thought or more remiss in action with respect to the things which must be done for public interest. . . . I have to be thankful that my children have not been stupid nor deformed in body; that I did not make more proficiency in rhetoric, poetry, and the other studies, by which I should perhaps have been completely engrossed, if I had seen that I was making great progress in them; . . . that I knew Apollonius, Rusticus, Maximus; . . . that I received clear and frequent impressions about living according to nature, and what kind of a life that is, so that, so far as depended on Heaven, and its gifts, help, and inspiration, nothing hindered me from forthwith living according to nature, though I still fall short of it through my own fault, and through not observing the admonitions of Heaven, and, I may almost say, its direct instructions; that my body has held out so long in such a kind of life as mine; that though it was my mother's lot to die young, she spent the last years of her life with me; that whenever I wished to help any man in his need, I was never told that I had not the means of doing it; that, when I had an inclination to philosophy, I did not fall into the hands of a sophist."

And, as he dwelt with gratitude on these helps and blessings vouchsafed to him, his mind (so, at least, it seems to me) would sometimes revert with awe to the perils and temptations of the lonely height where he stood, to the lives of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Domitian, in their hideous blackness and ruin; and then he wrote down for himself such a warning entry as this, significant and terrible in its abruptness:—

"A black character, a womanish character, a stubborn character, bestial, childish, animal, stupid, counterfeit, scurrilous, fraudulent, tyrannical!"

Or this:—

"About what am I now employing my soul? On every occasion I must ask myself this question, and enquire, What have I now in this part of me which they call the ruling principle, and whose soul have I now?—that of a child, or of a young man, or of a weak woman, or of a tyrant, or of one of the lower animals in the service of man, or of a wild beast?

The character he wished to attain he knew well, and beautifully he has marked it, and marked, too, his sense of shortcoming:—

"When thou hast assumed these names,—good, modest, true, rational, equal-minded, magnanimous,—take care that thou dost not change these names; and, if thou shouldst lose them, quickly return to them. If thou maintainest thyself in possession of these names without desiring that others should call thee by them, thou wilt be another being, and wilt enter on another life. For to continue to be such as thou hast hitherto been, and to be torn in pieces and defiled in such a life, is the character of a very stupid man, and one overfond of his life, and like those half-devoured fighters with wild beasts, who though covered with wounds and gore still entreat to be kept to the following day, though they will be exposed in the same state to the same claws and bites. Therefore fix thyself in the possession of these few names: and if thou art able to abide in them, abide as if thou wast removed to the Happy Islands."

For all his sweetness and serenity, however, man's point of life "between two infinities" (of that expression Marcus Aurelius is the real owner) was to him anything but a Happy Island, and the performances on it he saw through no veils of illusion. Nothing is in general more gloomy and monotonous than declamations on the hollowness and transitoriness of human life and grandeur: but here, too, the great charm of Marcus Aurelius, his emotion, comes in to relieve the monotony and to break through the gloom; and even on this eternally used topic he is imaginative, fresh, and striking:—

"Consider, for example, the times of Vespasian. Thou wilt see all these things, people marrying, bringing up children, sick, dying, warring, feasting, trafficking, cultivating the ground, flattering, obstinately arrogant, suspecting, plotting, wishing for somebody to die, grumbling about the present, loving, heaping up treasure, desiring to be consuls or kings. Well then that life of these people no longer exists at all. Again, go to the times of Trajan. All is again the same. Their life too is gone. But chiefly thou shouldst think of those whom thou hast thyself known distracting themselves about idle things, neglecting to do what was in acordance with their proper constitution, and to hold firmly to this and to be content with it."

Again:—

"The things which are much valued in life are empty, and rotten, and trifling; and people are like little dogs, biting one another, and little children quarrelling, crying, and then straightway laughing. But fidelity, and modesty, and justice, and truth are fled

> "'Up to Olympus from the wide-spread earth.'

What then is there which still detains thee here?"

And once more:—

"Look down from above on the countless herds of men, and their countless solemnities, and the infinitely varied voyagings in storms and calms, and the differences among those who are born, who live together, and die. And consider too the life lived by others in olden time, and the life now lived among barbarous nations, and how many know not even thy name, and how many will soon forget it, and how they who perhaps now are praising thee will very soon blame thee, and that neither a posthumous name is of any value, nor reputation, nor anything else."

He recognised, indeed, that (to use his own words) "the prime principle in man's constitution is the social;" and he laboured sincerely to make not only his acts towards his fellow-men, but his thoughts also, suitable to this conviction:—

"When thou wishest to delight thyself, think of the virtues of those who live with thee; for instance, the activity of one, and the modesty of another, and the liberality of a third, and some other good quality of a fourth."

Still, it is hard for a pure and thoughtful man to live in a state of rapture at the spectacle afforded to him by his fellow-creatures; above all it is hard, when such a man is placed as Marcus Aurelius was placed, and has had the meanness and perversity of his fellow-creatures thrust, in no common measure, upon his notice,—has had, time after time, to experience how "within ten days thou wilt seem a god to those to whom thou art now a beast and an ape." His true strain of thought as to his relations with his fellow-men is rather the following. He has been enumerating the higher consolations which may support a man at the approach of death, and he goes on:—

"But if thou requirest also a vulgar kind of comfort which shall reach thy heart, thou wilt be made best reconciled to death by observing the objects from which thou art going to be removed, and the morals of those with whom thy soul will no longer be mingled. For it is no way right to be offended with men, but it is thy duty to care for them and to bear with them gently; and yet to remember that thy departure will not be from men who have the same principles as thyself. For this is the only thing, if there be any, which could draw us the contrary way and attach us to life, to be permitted to live with those who have the same principles as ourselves. But now thou seest how great is the distress caused by the difference of those who live together, so that thou mayest say: 'Come quick, O death, lest perchance I too should forget myself.'"

O faithless and perverse generation! how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Sometimes this strain rises even to passion:—

"Short is the little which remains to thee of life. Live as on a mountain. Let men see, let them know, a real man, who lives as he was meant to live. If they cannot endure him, let them kill him. For that is better than to live as men do."

It is remarkable how little of a merely local and temporary character, how little of those *scoriæ* which a reader has to clear away before he gets to the precious ore, how little that even admits of doubt or question, the morality of Marcus Aurelius exhibits.[1] In general, the action he prescribes is action which every sound nature must recognise as right, and the motives he assigns are motives which every clear reason must recognise as valid. And so he remains the especial friend and comforter of scrupulous and difficult, yet pure-hearted and upward-striving souls, in those ages most especially that walk by sight, not by faith, but yet have no open vision; he cannot give such souls, perhaps, all they yearn for, but he gives them much; and what he gives them, they can receive.

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[1] Perhaps there is one exception. He is fond of urging as a motive for man's cheerful acquiescence in whatever befalls him, that "whatever happens to every man *is for the interest of the universal;*" that the whole contains nothing *which is not for its advantage;* that everything which happens to a man is to be accepted, "even if it seems disagreeable, *because it leads to the health of the universe.*" And the whole course of the universe, he adds, has a providential reference to man's welfare: "*all other things have been made for the sake of rational beings.*" Religion has in all ages freely used this language, and it is not religion which will object to Marcus Aurelius's use of it; but science can hardly accept as severely accurate this employment of the terms *interest* and *advantage.* Even to a sound nature and a clear reason the proposition that things happen "for the interest of the universal," as men conceive of interest, may seem to have no meaning at all, and the proposition that "all things have been made for the sake of rational beings" may seem to be false. Yet even to this language, not irresistibly cogent when it is thus absolutely used, Marcus Aurelius gives a

Yet no, it is not for what he thus gives them that such souls love him most! it is rather because of the emotion which gives to his voice so touching an accent, it is because he too yearns as they do for something unattained by him. What an affinity for Christianity had this persecutor of the Christians! The effusion of Christianity, its relieving tears, its happy self-sacrifice, were the very element, one feels, for which his soul longed; they were near him, they brushed him, he touched them, he passed them by. One feels, too, that the Marcus Aurelius one knows must still have remained, even had they presented themselves to him, in a great measure himself; he would have been no Justin;—but how would they have affected him? in what measure would it have changed him? Granted that he might have found, like the *Alogi* of modern times, in the most beautiful of the Gospels, the Gospel which has leavened Christendom most powerfully, the Gospel of St John, too much Greek metaphysics, too much *gnosis;* granted that this Gospel might have looked too like what he knew already to be a

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turn which makes it true and useful, when he says: "The ruling part of man can make a material for itself out of that which opposes it, as fire lays hold of what falls into it, and rises higher by means of this very material;"—when he says: "What else are all things except exercises for the reason? Persevere then until thou shalt have made all things thine own, as the stomach which is strengthened makes all things its own, as the blazing fire makes flame and brightness out of everything that is thrown into it;"—when he says: "Thou wilt not cease to be miserable till thy mind is in such a condition, that, what luxury is to those who enjoy pleasure, such shall be to thee, in every matter which presents itself, the doing of the things which are conformable to man's constitution; for a man ought to consider as an enjoyment everything which it is in his power to do according to his own nature,—and it is in his power everywhere." In this sense it is, indeed, most true that "all things have been made for the sake of rational beings;" that "all things work together for good."

total surprise to him: what, then, would he have said to the Sermon on the Mount, to the twenty-sixth chapter of St Matthew? What would have become of his notions of the *exitiabilis superstitio*, of the "obstinacy of the Christians"? Vain question! yet the greatest charm of Marcus Aurelius is that he makes us ask it. We see him wise, just, self-governed, tender, thankful, blameless; yet, with all this, agitated, stretching out his arms for something beyond,—*tendentemque manus ripæ ulterioris amore.*

X

ON TRANSLATING HOMER

. . . Nunquamne reponam?

I

It has more than once been suggested to me that I should translate Homer. That is a task for which I have neither the time nor the courage; but the suggestion led me to regard yet more closely a poet whom I had already long studied, and for one or two years the works of Homer were seldom out of my hands. The study of classical literature is probably on the decline; but, whatever may be the fate of this study in general, it is certain that, as instruction spreads and the number of readers increases, attention will be more and more directed to the poetry of Homer, not indeed as part of a classical course, but as the most important poetical monument existing. Even within the last ten years two fresh translations of the *Iliad* have appeared in England: one by a man of great ability and genuine learning, Professor Newman; the other by Mr Wright, the conscientious and painstaking translator of Dante. It may safely be asserted that neither of these works will take rank as the standard translation of Homer; that the task of rendering him will still be attempted by other translators. It may perhaps be possible to render to these some service, to save them some loss of labour, by pointing out rocks on which their predecessors have split, and the right objects on which a translator of Homer should fix his attention.

It is disputed what aim a translator should propose to himself in dealing with his original. Even this preliminary is not yet settled. On one side it is said that the translation ought to be such "that the reader should, if possible, forget that it is a translation at all, and be lulled into the illusion that he is reading an original work—something original" (if the translation be in English), "from an English hand." The real original is in this case, it is said, "taken as a basis on which to rear a poem that shall affect our countrymen as the original may be conceived to have affected its natural hearers." On the other hand, Mr Newman, who states the foregoing doctrine only to condemn it, declares that he "aims at precisely the opposite: to retain every peculiarity of the original, so far as he is able, *with the greater care the more foreign it may happen to be*"; so that it may "never be forgotten that he is imitating, and imitating in a different material." The translator's "first duty," says Mr Newman, "is a historical one, to be *faithful*." Probably both sides would agree that the translator's "first duty is to be faithful"; but the question at issue between them is, in what faithfulness consists.

My one object is to give practical advice to a translator; and I shall not the least concern myself with theories of translation as such. But I advise the translator not to try "to rear on the basis of the *Iliad*, a poem that shall affect our countrymen as the original may be conceived to have affected its natural hearers"; and for this simple reason, that we cannot possibly tell *how* the *Iliad* "affected its natural hearers." It is probably meant merely that he should try to affect Englishmen powerfully, as Homer affected Greeks powerfully; but this direction is not enough, and can give no real guidance. For all great poets affect their hearers powerfully, but the effect of one poet is one thing, that of another poet another thing: it is our translator's business to reproduce the effect of Homer, and the most powerful emotion of the unlearned English reader can never assure him whether he has *re*produced this, or whether he has produced something else. So, again, he may follow Mr Newman's directions, he may try to be "faithful," he may "retain every peculiarity of his original"; but who is to assure him, who is to assure Mr Newman himself, that, when he has done this, he has done that for which Mr Newman enjoins this to be done, "adhered closely to Homer's manner and habit of thought"? Evidently the translator needs some more practical directions than these. No one can tell him how Homer affected the Greeks; but there are those who can tell him how Homer affects *them*. These are scholars; who possess, at the same time with knowledge of Greek, adequate poetical taste and feeling. No translation will seem to them of much worth compared with the original; but they alone can say whether the translation produces more or less the same effect upon them as the original. They are the only competent tribunal in this matter: the Greeks are dead; the unlearned Englishman has not the data for judging; and no man can safely confide in his own single judgment of his own work. Let not the translator, then, trust to his notions of what the ancient Greeks would have thought of him; he will lose himself in the vague. Let him not trust to what the ordinary English reader thinks of him; he will be taking the blind for his guide. Let him not trust to his own judgment of his own work; he may be misled by individual caprices. Let him ask how his work affects those who both know Greek and can appreciate poetry; whether to read it gives the Provost of Eton, or Professor Thompson at Cambridge, or Professor Jowett here in Oxford, at all the same feeling which to read the original gives them. I consider that when Bentley said of Pope's translation, "It was a pretty poem, but must not be called Homer," the work, in spite of all its power and attractiveness, was judged.

Ὡς ἂν ὁ φρόνιμος ὁρίσειεν, "as the judicious would determine," that is a test to which everyone professes himself willing to submit his works. Unhappily, in most cases, no two persons agree as to who "the judicious" are. In the present case, the ambiguity is removed: I suppose the translator at one with me as to the tribunal to which alone he should look for judgment; and he has thus obtained a practical test by which to estimate the real success of his work. How is he to proceed, in order that his work, tried by this test, may be found most successful?

First of all, there are certain negative counsels which I will give him. Homer has occupied men's minds so much, such a literature has arisen about him, that every one who approaches him should resolve strictly to limit himself to that which may directly serve the object for which he approaches him. I advise the translator to have nothing to do with the questions, whether Homer ever existed; whether the poet of the *Iliad* be one or many; whether the *Iliad* be one poem or an *Achilleis* and an *Iliad* stuck together; whether the Christian doctrine of the Atonement is shadowed forth in the Homeric mythology; whether the

Goddess Latona in any way prefigures the Virgin Mary, and so on. These are questions which have been discussed with learning, with ingenuity, nay, with genius; but they have two inconveniences,—one general for all who approach them, one particular for the translator. The general inconvenience is that there really exist no data for determining them. The particular inconvenience is that their solution by the translator, even were it possible, could be of no benefit to his translation.

I advise him, again, not to trouble himself with constructing a special vocabulary for his use in translation; with excluding a certain class of English words, and with confining himself to another class, in obedience to any theory about the peculiar qualities of Homer's style. Mr Newman says that "the entire dialect of Homer being essentially archaic, that of a translator ought to be as much Saxo-Norman as possible, and owe as little as possible to the elements thrown into our language by classical learning." Mr Newman is unfortunate in the observance of his own theory; for I continually find in his translation words of Latin origin, which seem to me quite alien to the simplicity of Homer,—"responsive," for instance, which is a favourite word of Mr Newman, to represent the Homeric ἀμειβόμενος:

> Great Hector of the motley helm thus spake to her *responsive*.
> But thus *responsively* to him spake godlike Alexander.

And the word "celestial," again, in the grand address of Zeus to the horses of Achilles,

> You, who are born *celestial* from Eld and Death exempted

seems to me in that place exactly to jar upon the feeling as too bookish. But, apart from the question of Mr Newman's fidelity to his own theory, such a theory seems to me both dangerous for a translator and false in itself. Dangerous for a translator; because, wherever one finds such a theory announced (and one finds it pretty often), it is generally followed by an explosion of pedantry; and pedantry is of all things in the world the most un-Homeric. False in itself; because, in fact, we owe to the Latin element in our language most of that very rapidity and clear decisiveness by which it is contradistinguished from the German, and in sympathy with the languages of Greece and Rome: so that to limit an English translator of Homer to words of Saxon origin is to deprive him of one of his special advantages for translating Homer. In Voss's well-known translation of Homer, it is precisely the qualities of his German language itself, something heavy and trailing both in the structure of its sentences and in the words of which it is composed, which prevent his translation, in spite of the hexameters, in spite of the fidelity, from creating in us the impression created by the Greek. Mr Newman's prescription, if followed, would just strip the English translator of the advantage which he has over Voss.

The frame of mind in which we approach an author influences our correctness of appreciation of him; and Homer should be approached by a translator in the simplest frame of mind possible. Modern sentiment tries to make the ancient not less than the modern world its own; but against modern sentiment in its applications to Homer the translator, if he would feel Homer truly—and unless he feels him truly, how can he render him truly?—cannot be too much on his guard. For example: the writer of an interesting article on English translations of Homer, in the last number of the *National Review*, quotes, I see, with admiration, a criticism of Mr Ruskin on the use of the epithet φυσίζοος, "life-giving," in that beautiful passage in the third book of the *Iliad*, which follows Helen's mention of her brothers Castor and Pollux as alive, though they were in truth dead:

> ὣς φάτο· τοὺς δ' ἤδη κατέχεν φυσίζοος αἶα
> ἐν Δακεδαίμονι αὖθι, φίλῃ ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ.[1]

"The poet," says Mr Ruskin, "has to speak of the earth in sadness; but he will not let that sadness affect or change his thought of it. No; though Castor and Pollux be dead, yet the earth is our mother still,—fruitful, life-giving." This is a just specimen of that sort of application of modern sentiment to the ancients, against which a student, who wishes to feel the ancients truly, cannot too resolutely defend himself. It reminds one, as, alas! so much of Mr Ruskin's writing reminds one, of those words of the most delicate of living critics: "Comme tout genre de composition a son écueil particulier, *celui du genre romanesque, c'est le faux*." The reader may feel moved as he reads it;

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[1] *Iliad*, iii. 243.

but it is not the less an example of "le faux" in criticism; it is false. It is not true, as to that particular passage, that Homer called the earth φυσίζοος, because, "though he had to speak of the earth in sadness, he would not let that sadness change or affect his thought of it," but consoled himself by considering that "the earth is our mother still,—fruitful, life-giving." It is not true, as a matter of general criticism, that this kind of sentimentality, eminently modern, inspires Homer at all. "From Homer and Polygnotus I every day learn more clearly," says Goethe, "that in our life here above ground we have, properly speaking, to enact Hell"[1]:—if the student must absolutely have a keynote to the *Iliad*, let him take this of Goethe, and see what he can do with it; it will not, at any rate, like the tender pantheism of Mr Ruskin, falsify for him the whole strain of Homer.

These are negative counsels; I come to the positive. When I say, the translator of Homer should above all be penetrated by a sense of four qualities of his author;—that he is eminently rapid; that he is eminently plain and direct, both in the evolution of his thought and in the expression of it, that is, both in his syntax and in his words; that he is eminently plain and direct in the substance of his thought, that is, in his matter and ideas; and, finally that he is eminently noble;—I probably seem to be saying what is too general to be of much service to anybody. Yet it is strictly true that, for want of duly penetrating themselves with the first-named quality of Homer, his rapidity, Cowper and Mr Wright have failed in rendering him; that, for want of duly appreciating the second-named quality, his plainness and directness of style and diction, Pope and Mr Sotheby have failed in rendering him; that for want of appreciating the third, his plainness and directness of ideas, Chapman has failed in rendering him; while for want of appreciating the fourth, his nobleness, Mr Newman, who has clearly seen some of the faults of his predecessors, has yet failed more conspicuously than any of them.

Coleridge says, in his strange language, speaking of the union of the human soul with the divine essence, that this takes place

> Whene'er the mist, which stands 'twixt God and thee,
> Defecates to a pure transparency;

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[1] *Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe*, vi. 230.

and so, too, it may be said of that union of the translator with his original, which alone can produce a good translation, that it takes place when the mist which stands between them—the mist of alien modes of thinking, speaking, and feeling on the translator's part—"defecates to a pure transparency," and disappears. But between Cowper and Homer —(Mr Wright repeats in the main Cowper's manner, as Mr Sotheby repeats Pope's manner, and neither Mr Wright's translation nor Mr Sotheby's has, I must be forgiven for saying, any proper reason for existing)—between Cowper and Homer there is interposed the mist of Cowper's elaborate Miltonic manner, entirely alien to the flowing rapidity of Homer; between Pope and Homer there is interposed the mist of Pope's literary artificial manner, entirely alien to the plain naturalness of Homer's manner; between Chapman and Homer there is interposed the mist of the fancifulness of the Elizabethan age, entirely alien to the plain directness of Homer's thought and feeling; while between Mr Newman and Homer is interposed a cloud of more than Egyptian thickness,—namely, a manner, in Mr Newman's version, eminently ignoble, while Homer's manner is eminently noble.

I do not despair of making all these propositions clear to a student who approaches Homer with a free mind. First, Homer is eminently rapid, and to this rapidity the elaborate movement of Miltonic blank verse is alien. The reputation of Cowper, that most interesting man and excellent poet, does not depend on his translation of Homer; and in his preface to the second edition, he himself tells us that he felt,—he had too much poetical taste not to feel,—on returning to his own version after six or seven years, "more dissatisfied with it himself than the most difficult to be pleased of all his judges." And he was dissatisfied with it for the right reason,—that "it seemed to him deficient *in the grace of ease*." Yet he seems to have originally misconceived the manner of Homer so much, that it is no wonder he rendered him amiss. "The similitude of Milton's manner to that of Homer is such," he says, "that no person familiar with both can read either without being reminded of the other; and it is in those breaks and pauses to which the numbers of the English poet are so much indebted, both for their dignity and variety, that he chiefly copies the

Grecian." It would be more true to say: "The unlikeness of Milton's manner to that of Homer is such, that no person familiar with both can read either without being struck with his difference from the other; and it is in his breaks and pauses that the English poet is most unlike the Grecian."

The inversion and pregnant conciseness of Milton or Dante are, doubtless, most impressive qualities of style; but they are the very opposites of the directness and flowingness of Homer, which he keeps alike in passages of the simplest narrative, and in those of the deepest emotion. Not only, for example, are these lines of Cowper un-Homeric:

> So numerous seemed those fires the banks between
> Of Xanthus, blazing, and the fleet of Greece
> In prospect all of Troy;

where the position of the word "blazing" gives an entirely un-Homeric movement to this simple passage, describing the fires of the Trojan camp outside of Troy; but the following lines, in that very highly-wrought passage where the horse of Achilles answers his master's reproaches for having left Patroclus on the field of battle, are equally un-Homeric:

> For not through sloth or tardiness on us
> Aught chargeable, have Ilium's sons thine arms
> Stript from Patroclus' shoulders; but a God
> Matchless in battle, offspring of bright-haired
> Latona, him contending in the van
> Slew, for the glory of the chief of Troy.

Here even the first inversion, "have Ilium's sons thine arms Stript from Patroclus' shoulders," gives the reader a sense of a movement not Homeric; and the second inversion, "a God him contending in the van Slew," gives this sense ten times stronger. Instead of moving on without check, as in reading the original, the reader twice finds himself, in reading the translation, brought up and checked. Homer moves with the same simplicity and rapidity in the highly-wrought as in the simple passage.

It is in vain that Cowper insists on his fidelity: "my chief boast is that I have adhered closely to my original":—"the matter found in me, whether the reader like it or not, is found also in Homer; and the matter not found in me, how much soever the reader may admire it, is found only in Mr Pope." To suppose that it is *fidelity* to an original to give its matter, unless you at the same time give its manner; or, rather, to suppose that you can really give its matter at all, unless you can give its manner, is just the mistake of our pre-Raphaelite school of painters, who do not understand that the peculiar effect of nature resides in the whole and not in the parts. So the peculiar effect of a poet resides in his manner and movement, not in his words taken separately. It is well known how conscientiously literal is Cowper in his translation of Homer. It is well known how extravagantly free is Pope.

So let it be!
Portents and prodigies are lost on me;

that is Pope's rendering of the words,

Ξάνθε, τί μοι θάνατον μαντεύεαι; οὐδέ τί σε χρή·[1]

Xanthus, why prophesiest thou my death to me?
thou needest not at all:

yet, on the whole, Pope's translation of the *Iliad* is more Homeric than Cowper's, for it is more rapid.

Pope's movement, however, though rapid, is not of the same kind as Homer's; and here I come to the real objection to rhyme in a translation of Homer. It is commonly said that rhyme is to be abandoned in a translation of Homer, because "the exigencies of rhyme," to quote Mr Newman, "positively forbid faithfulness"; because "a just translation of any ancient poet in rhyme," to quote Cowper, "is impossible." This, however, is merely an accidental objection to rhyme. If this were all, it might be supposed that if rhymes were more abundant Homer could be adequately translated in rhyme. But this is not so; there is a deeper, a substantial objection to rhyme in a translation of Homer. It is, that rhyme inevitably tends to pair lines which in the original are independent, and thus the movement of the poem is changed. In these lines of Chapman, for instance, from Sarpedon's speech to Glaucus, in the twelfth book of the *Iliad*:

O friend, if keeping back
Would keep back age from us, and death, and that we might not wrack

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[1] *Iliad*, xix. 420.

In this life's human sea at all, but that deferring now
We shunned death ever,—nor would I half this vain valor show,
Nor glorify a folly so, to wish thee to advance;
But since we *must* go, though not here, and that besides the chance
Proposed now, there are infinite fates, etc.

Here the necessity of making the line,

Nor glorify a folly so, to wish thee to advance,

rhyme with the line which follows it, entirely changes and spoils the movement of the passage.

οὔτε κεν αὐτὸς ἐνὶ πρώτοισι μαχοίμην,
οὔτε κέ σε στέλλοιμι μάχην ἐς κυδιάνειραν·[1]

Neither would I myself go forth to fight with the foremost,
Nor would I urge thee on to enter the glorious battle,

says Homer; there he stops, and begins an opposed movement:

νῦν δ'—ἔμπης γὰρ Κῆρες ἐφεστᾶσιν θανάτοιο—

But—for a thousand fates of death stand close to us always—

This line, in which Homer wishes to go away with the most marked rapidity from the line before, Chapman is forced, by the necessity of rhyming, intimately to connect with the line before.

But since we *must* go, though not here, and that, besides the chance.

The moment the word *chance* strikes our ear, we are irresistibly carried back to *advance* and to the whole previous line, which, according to Homer's own feeling, we ought to have left behind us entirely, and to be moving farther and farther away from.

Rhyme certainly, by intensifying antithesis, can intensify separation, and this is precisely what Pope does; but this balanced rhetorical antithesis, though very effective, is entirely un-Homeric. And this is what I mean by saying that Pope fails to render Homer, because he does not render his plainness and directness of style and diction. Where Homer marks separation by moving away, Pope marks it by antithesis. No passage could show this better than the passage I have just quoted, on which I will pause for a moment.

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[1] *Iliad*, xii. 324.

Robert Wood, whose *Essay on the Genius of Homer* is mentioned by Goethe as one of the books which fell into his hands when his powers were first developing themselves, and strongly interested him, relates of this passage a striking story. He says that in 1762, at the end of the Seven Years' War, being then Under-Secretary of State, he was directed to wait upon the President of the Council, Lord Granville, a few days before he died, with the preliminary articles of the Treaty of Paris. "I found him," he continues, "so languid, that I proposed postponing my business for another time; but he insisted that I should stay, saying, it could not prolong his life to neglect his duty; and repeating the following passage out of Sarpedon's speech, he dwelled with particular emphasis on the third line, which recalled to his mind the distinguishing part he had taken in public affairs:

> *ὦ πέπον, εἰ μὲν γὰρ, πόλεμον περὶ τόνδε φυγόντε,*
> *αἰεὶ δὴ μέλλοιμεν ἀγήρω τ᾽ ἀθανάτω τε*
> *ἔσσεσθ᾽, οὔτε κεν αὐτὸς ἐνὶ πρώτοισι μαχοίμην,*[1]
> *οὔτε κέ σε στέλλοιμι μάχην ἐς κυδιάνειραν·*
> *νῦν δ᾽—ἔμπης γὰρ Κῆρες ἐφεστᾶσιν θανάτοιο*
> *μυρίαι, ἃς οὐκ ἔστι φυγεῖν βρότον, οὐδ᾽ ὑπαλύξαι—*
> *ἴομεν.*

His Lordship repeated the last word several times with a calm and determinate resignation; and, after a serious pause of some minutes, he desired to hear the Treaty read, to which he listened with great attention, and recovered spirits enough to declare the approbation of a dying statesman (I use his own words) "on the most glorious war, and most honourable peace this nation ever saw.'"[1]

I quote this story, first, because it is interesting as exhibiting the English aristocracy at its very height of culture, lofty spirit, and greatness, towards the middle of the 18th century. I quote it, secondly, because it seems to me to illustrate Goethe's saying which I mentioned, that our life, in Homer's view of it, represents a conflict and a hell; and it brings out, too, what there is tonic and fortifying in this doctrine. I quote it, lastly, because it shows that the passage is just one of those in translating which Pope will be at his best, a passage of strong emotion and oratorical movement, not of simple narrative or description.

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[1] These are the words on which Lord Granville "dwelled with particular emphasis."

[2] Robert Wood, *Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer*, London, 1775, p. vii.

Pope translates the passage thus:

> Could all our care elude the gloomy grave
> Which claims no less the fearful than the brave,
> For lust of fame I should not vainly dare
> In fighting fields, nor urge thy soul to war:
> But since, alas! ignoble age must come,
> Disease, and death's inexorable doom;
> The life which others pay, let us bestow,
> And give to fame what we to nature owe.

Nothing could better exhibit Pope's prodigious talent; and nothing, too, could be better in its own way. But, as Bentley said, "You must not call it Homer." One feels that Homer's thought has passed through a literary and rhetorical crucible, and come out highly intellectualised; come out in a form which strongly impresses us, indeed, but which no longer impresses us in the same way as when it was uttered by Homer. The antithesis of the last two lines—

> The life which others pay, let us bestow,
> And give to fame what we to nature owe

is excellent, and is just suited to Pope's heroic couplet; but neither the antithesis itself, nor the couplet which conveys it, is suited to the feeling or to the movement of the Homeric ἴομεν.

A literary and intellectualised language is, however, in its own way well suited to grand matters; and Pope, with a language of this kind and his own admirable talent, comes off well enough as long as he has passion, or oratory, or a great crisis to deal with. Even here, as I have been pointing out, he does not render Homer; but he and his style are in themselves strong. It is when he comes to level passages, passages of narrative or description, that he and his style are sorely tried, and prove themselves weak. A perfectly plain direct style can of course convey the simplest matter as naturally as the grandest; indeed, it must be harder for it, one would say, to convey a grand matter worthily and nobly, than to convey a common matter as, alone such a matter should be conveyed, plainly and simply.

But the style of Rasselas is incomparably better fitted to describe a sage philosophising than a soldier lighting his camp-fire. The style of Pope is not the style of Rasselas; but it is equally a literary style, equally unfitted to describe a simple matter with the plain naturalness of Homer.

Everyone knows the passage at the end of the eighth book of the *Iliad*, where the fires of the Trojan encampment are likened to the stars. It is very far from my wish to hold Pope up to ridicule, so I shall not quote the commencement of the passage, which in the original is of great and celebrated beauty, and in translating which Pope has been singularly and notoriously fortunate. But the latter part of the passage, where Homer leaves the stars, and comes to the Trojan fires, treats of the plainest, most matter-of-fact subject possible, and deals with this, as Homer always deals with every subject, in the plainest and most straightforward style. "So many in number, between the ships and the streams of Xanthus, shone forth in front of Troy the fires kindled by the Trojans. There were kindled a thousand fires in the plain; and by each one there sat fifty men in the light of the blazing fire. And the horses, munching white barley and rye, and standing by the chariots, waited for the bright-throned Morning."[1]

In Pope's translation, this plain story becomes the following:

> So many flames before proud Ilion blaze,
> And brighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays;
> The long reflections of the distant fires
> Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires.
> A thousand piles the dusky horrors gild,
> And shoot a shady lustre o'er the field.
> Full fifty guards each flaming pile attend,
> Whose umbered arms, by fits, thick flashes send;
> Loud neigh the coursers o'er their heaps of corn,
> And ardent warriors wait the rising morn.

It is for passages of this sort, which, after all, form the bulk of a narrative poem, that Pope's style is so bad. In elevated passages he is powerful, as Homer is powerful, though not in the same way; but in plain narrative, where Homer is still powerful and delightful, Pope, by the inherent fault of his style, is ineffective and out of taste. Wordsworth says somewhere, that wherever Virgil seems to have composed

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[1] *Iliad*, viii. 560.

"with his eye on the object," Dryden fails to render him. Homer invariably composes "with his eye on the object," whether the object be a moral or a material one: Pope composes with his eye on his style, into which he translates his object, whatever it is. That, therefore, which Homer conveys to us immediately, Pope conveys to us through a medium. He aims at turning Homer's sentiments pointedly and rhetorically; at investing Homer's description with ornament and dignity. A sentiment may be changed by being put into a pointed and oratorical form, yet may still be very effective in that form; but a description, the moment it takes its eyes off that which it is to describe, and begins to think of ornamenting itself, is worthless.

Therefore, I say, the translator of Homer should penetrate himself with a sense of the plainness and directness of Homer's style; of the simplicity with which Homer's thought is evolved and expressed. He has Pope's fate before his eyes, to show him what a divorce may be created even between the most gifted translator and Homer by an artificial evolution of thought and a literary cast of style.

Chapman's style is not artificial and literary like Pope's nor his movement elaborate and self retarding like the Miltonic movement of Cowper. He is plain-spoken, fresh, vigorous, and, to a certain degree, rapid; and all these are Homeric qualities. I cannot say that I think the movement of his fourteen-syllable line, which has been so much commended, Homeric; but on this point I shall have more to say by and by, when I come to speak of Mr Newman's metrical exploits. But it is not distinctly anti-Homeric, like the movement of Milton's blank verse; and it has a rapidity of its own. Chapman's diction, too, is generally good, that is, appropriate to Homer; above all, the syntactical character of his style is appropriate. With these merits, what prevents his translation from being a satisfactory version of Homer? Is it merely the want of literal faithfulness to his original, imposed upon him, it is said, by the exigencies of rhyme? Has this celebrated version, which has so many advantages, no other and deeper defect than that? Its author is a poet, and a poet, too, of the Elizabethan age; the golden age of English literature as it is called, and on the whole truly called; for, whatever be the defects of Elizabethan literature (and they are great), we have no development of our literature to compare with it for vigour and richness. This age, too, showed what it could do in translating, by producing a master-piece, its version of the Bible.

Chapman's translation has often been praised as eminently Homeric. Keats's fine sonnet in its honour everyone knows; but Keats could not read the original, and therefore could not really judge the translation. Coleridge, in praising Chapman's version, says at the same time, "It will give you small idea of Homer." But the grave authority of Mr Hallum pronounces this translation to be "often exceedingly Homeric;" and its latest editor boldly declares that by what, with a deplorable style, he calls "his own innative Homeric genius," Chapman "has thoroughly identified himself with Homer;" and that "we pardon him even for his digressions, for they are such as we feel Homer himself would have written."

I confess that I can never read twenty lines of Chapman's version without recurring to Bentley's cry, "This is not Homer!" and that from a deeper cause than any unfaithfulness occasioned by the fetters of rhyme.

I said that there were four things which eminently distinguished Homer, and with a sense of which Homer's translator should penetrate himself as fully as possible. One of these four things was, the plainness and directness of Homer's ideas. I have just been speaking of the plainness and directness of his style; but the plainness and directness of the contents of his style, of his ideas themselves, is not less remarkable. But as eminently as Homer is plain, so eminently is the Elizabethan literature in general, and Chapman in particular, fanciful. Steeped in humours and fantasticality up to its very lips, the Elizabethan age, newly arrived at the free use of the human faculties after their long term of bondage, and delighting to exercise them freely, suffers from its own extravagance in this first exercise of them, can hardly bring itself to see an object quietly or to describe it temperately. Happily, in the translation of the Bible, the sacred character of their original inspired the translators with such respect that they did not dare to give the rein to their own fancies in dealing with it. But, in dealing with works of profane literature, in dealing with poetical works above all, which highly stimulated them, one may say that the minds of the Elizabethan translators were *too* active; that they could not forbear importing so much of their own, and this of a most peculiar and Elizabethan character, into their original, that they effaced the character of the original itself.

Take merely the opening pages to Chapman's translation, the introductory verses, and the dedications. You will find:

> An Anagram of the name of our Dread Prince,
> My most gracious and sacred Mæcenas,
> Henry, Prince of Wales,
> Our Sunn, Heyr, Peace, Life,

Henry, son of James the First, to whom the work is dedicated. Then comes an address,

> To the sacred Fountain of Princes,
> Sole Empress of Beauty and Virtue, Anne, Queen of England, etc.

All the Middle Age, with its grotesqueness, its conceits, its irrationality, is still in these opening pages; they by themselves are sufficient to indicate to us what a gulf divides Chapman from the "clearest-souled" of poets, from Homer, almost as great a gulf as that which divides him from Voltaire. Pope has been sneered at for saying that Chapman writes "somewhat as one might imagine Homer himself to have written before he arrived at years of discretion." But the remark is excellent: Homer expresses himself like a man of adult reason, Chapman like a man whose reason has not yet cleared itself. For instance, if Homer had had to say of a poet, that he hoped his merit was now about to be fully established in the opinion of good judges, he was as incapable of saying this as Chapman says it,—"Though truth in her very nakedness sits in so deep a pit, that from Gades to Aurora, and Ganges, few eyes can sound her, I hope yet those few here will so discover and confirm that the date being out of her darkness in this morning of our poet, he shall now gird his temples with the sun,"—I say, Homer was as incapable of saying this in that manner, as Voltaire himself would have been. Homer, indeed, has actually an affinity with Voltaire in the unrivalled clearness and straightforwardness of his thinking; in the way in which he keeps to one thought at a time, and puts that thought forth in its complete natural plainness, instead of being led away from it by some fancy striking him in connection with it, and being beguiled to wander off with this fancy till his original thought, in its natural reality, knows him no more. What could better show us how gifted a race was this Greek race? The same member of it has not only the power of profoundly touching that natural heart of humanity which it is Voltaire's weakness that he cannot reach, but can also address the understanding with all Voltaire's admirable simplicity and rationality.

My limits will not allow me to do more than shortly illustrate, from Chapman's version of the *Iliad*, what I mean when I speak of this vital difference between Homer and an Elizabethan poet in the quality of their thought; between the plain simplicity of the thought of the one, and the curious complexity of the thought of the other. As in Pope's case, I carefully abstain from choosing passages for the express purpose of making Chapman appear ridiculous; Chapman, like Pope, merits in himself all respect, though he too, like Pope, fails to render Homer.

In that tonic speech of Sarpedon, of which I have said so much, Homer, you may remember, has:

> εἰ μὲν γὰρ, πόλεμον περὶ τόνδε φυγόντε,
> αἰεὶ δὴ μέλλοιμεν ἀγήρω τ' ἀθανάτω τε ἔσσεσθ'—

> if indeed, but once *this* battle avoided,
> We were for ever to live without growing old and immortal—

Chapman cannot be satisfied with this, but must add a fancy to it:

> if keeping back
> Would keep back age from us, and death, and *that we might not wrack*
> *In this life's human sea at all;*

and so on. Again; in another passage which I have before quoted, where Zeus says to the horses of Peleus,

> τί σφῶϊ δόμεν Πηλῆϊ ἄνακτι
> θνητῷ; ὑμεῖς δ' ἐστὸν ἀγήρω τ' ἀθανάτω τε·[1]

Why gave we you to royal Peleus, to a mortal? but ye are without old age, and immortal.

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[1] *Iliad*, xvii. 443.

Chapman sophisticates this into:

> Why gave we you t' a mortal king, when immortality
> And *incapacity of age so dignifies your states?*

Again; in the speech of Achilles to his horses, where Achilles, according to Homer, says simply "Take heed that ye bring your master safe back to the host of the Danaans, in some other sort than the last time, when the battle is ended," Chapman sophisticates this into:

> *When with blood, for this day's fast observed, revenge shall yield*
> *Our heart satiety*, bring us off.

In Hector's famous speech, again, at his parting from Andromache, Homer makes him say: "Nor does my own heart so bid me" (to keep safe behind the walls), "since I have learned to be staunch always, and to fight among the foremost of the Trojans, busy on behalf of my father's great glory, and my own."[1] In Chapman's hands this becomes:

> The spirit I first did breathe
> Did never teach me that; much less, since the contempt of death
> Was settled in me, *and my mind knew what a worthy was,*
> *Whose office is to lead in fight, and give no danger pass*
> *Without improvement. In this fire must Hector's trial shine:*
> *Here must his country, father, friends, be in him made divine.*

You see how ingeniously Homer's plain thought is *tormented*, as the French would say, here. Homer goes on: "For well I know this in my mind and in my heart, the day will be, when sacred Troy shall perish—"

> ἔσσεται ἦμαρ, ὅτ᾽ ἄν ποτ᾽ ὀλώλῃ Ἴλιος ἱρή.

Chapman makes this:

> And such a *stormy* day shall come, in mind and soul I know,
> When sacred Troy *shall shed her towers, for tears of overthrow.*

I might go on for ever, but I could not give you a better illustration than this last, of what I mean by saying that the Elizabethan poet fails to render Homer because he cannot forbear to interpose a play of thought between his object and its expression. Chapman translates his object into Elizabethan, as Pope translates it into the Augustan of Queen Anne; both convey it to us through a medium.

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[1] *Iliad*, vi. 444.

Homer, on the other hand, sees his object and conveys it to us immediately.

And yet, in spite of this perfect plainness and directness of Homer's style, in spite of this perfect plainness and directness of his ideas, he is eminently *noble;* he works as entirely in the grand style, he is as grandiose, as Phidias, or Dante, or Michael Angelo. This is what makes his translators despair. "To give relief," says Cowper, "to prosaic subjects" (such as dressing, eating, drinking, harnessing, travelling, going to bed), that is to treat such subjects nobly, in the grand style, "without seeming unreasonably tumid, is extremely difficult." It *is* difficult, but Homer has done it. Homer is precisely the incomparable poet he is, because he has done it. His translator must not be tumid, must not be artificial, must not be literary; true: but then also he must not be commonplace, must not be ignoble. I have shown you how translators of Homer fail by wanting rapidity, by wanting simplicity of style, by wanting plainness of thought: in a second lecture I will show you how a translator fails by wanting nobility.

II

I MUST repeat what I said in beginning, that the translator of Homer ought steadily to keep in mind where lies the real test of the success of his translation, what judges he is to try to satisfy. He is to try to satisfy *scholars*, because scholars alone have the means of really judging him. A scholar may be a pedant, it is true, and then his judgment will be worthless; but a scholar may also have poetical feeling, and then he can judge him truly; whereas all the poetical feeling in the world will not enable a man who is not a scholar to judge him truly. For the translator is to reproduce Homer, and the scholar alone has the means of knowing that Homer who is to be reproduced. He knows him but imperfectly, for he is separated from him by time, race, and language; but he alone knows him at all. Yet people speak as if there were two real tribunals in this matter,—the scholar's tribunal, and that of the general public. They speak as if the scholar's judgment was one thing, and the general public's judgment another; both with their shortcomings, both with their liability to error; but both to be regarded by the translator. The translator who makes verbal literalness his chief care "will," says a writer in the *National Review* whom I have already quoted, "be appreciated by the scholar accustomed to test a translation rigidly by comparison with the original, to look perhaps with excessive care to finish in detail rather than boldness and general effect, and find pardon even for a version that seems bare and bold, so it be scholastic and faithful." But, if the scholar in judging a translation looks to detail rather than to general effect, he judges it pedantically and ill. The appeal, however, lies not from the pedantic scholar to the general public, which can only like or dislike Chapman's version, or Pope's, or Mr Newman's, but cannot *judge* them; it lies from the pedantic scholar to the scholar who is not pedantic, who knows that Homer is Homer by his general effect, and not by his single words, and who demands but one thing in a translation—that it shall, as nearly as possible, reproduce for him the *general effect* of Homer. This, then, remains the one proper aim of the translator: to reproduce on the intelligent scholar, as nearly as possible, the general effect of Homer. Except so far as he reproduces this, he loses his labour, even though he may make a spirited *Iliad* of his own, like Pope, or translate Homer's *Iliad* word for word, like Mr Newman. If his proper aim were to stimulate in any manner possible the general public, he might be right in following Pope's example; if his proper aim were to help schoolboys to construe Homer, he might be right in following Mr Newman's. But it is not: his proper aim is, I repeat it yet once more, to reproduce on the intelligent scholar, as nearly as he can, the general effect of Homer.

When, therefore, Cowper says, "My chief boast is that I have adhered closely to my original"; when Mr Newman says, "My aim is to retain every peculiarity of the original, to be *faithful*, exactly as is the case with the draughtsman of the Elgin marbles"; their real judge only replies: "It may be so: reproduce then upon us, reproduce the effect of Homer, as a good copy reproduces the effect of the Elgin marbles."

When, again, Mr Newman tells us that "by an exhaustive process of argument and experiment" he has found a metre which is at once the metre of "the modern Greek epic," and a metre "like in moral genius" to Homer's metre, his judge has still but the same answer for him: "It may be so: reproduce then on our ear something of the effect produced by the movement of Homer."

But what is the general effect which Homer produces on Mr Newman himself? because, when we know this, we shall know whether he and his judges are agreed at the outset, whether we may expect him, if he can reproduce the effect he feels, if his hand does not betray him in the execution, to satisfy his judges and to succeed. If, however, Mr Newman's impression from Homer is something quite different from that of his judges, then it can hardly be expected that any amount of labour or talent will enable him to reproduce for them *their* Homer.

Mr Newman does not leave us in doubt as to the general effect which Homer makes upon him. As I have told you what is the general effect which Homer makes upon me,—that of a most rapidly moving poet, that of a poet most plain and direct in his style, that of a poet most plain and direct in his ideas, that of a poet eminently noble,—so Mr Newman tells us his general impression of Homer. "Homer's style," he says, "is direct, popular, forcible, quaint, flowing, garrulous." Again: "Homer rises and sinks with his subject, is prosaic when it is tame, is low when it is mean."

I lay my finger on four words in these two sentences of Mr Newman, and I say that the man who could apply those words to Homer can never render Homer truly. The four words are these: *quaint*, *garrulous*, *prosaic*, *low*. Search the English language for a word which does not apply to Homer, and you could not fix on a better than *quaint*, unless perhaps you fixed on one of the other three.

Again; "to translate Homer suitably," says Mr Newman, "we need a diction sufficiently antiquated to obtain pardon of the reader for its frequent homeliness." "I am concerned," he says again, "with the artistic problem of obtaining a plausible aspect of moderate antiquity, while remaining easily intelligible." And again, he speaks of "the more antiquated style suited to this subject." Quaint! antiquated!—but to whom? Sir Thomas Browne is quaint, and the diction of Chaucer is antiquated: does Mr Newman suppose that Homer seemed quaint to Sophocles, when he read him, as Sir Thomas Browne seems quaint to us, when we read him? or that Homer's diction seemed antiquated to Sophocles, as Chaucer's diction seems antiquated to us? But we cannot really know, I confess, how Homer seemed to Sophocles: well then, to those who can tell us how he seems to them, to the living scholar, to our only present witness on this matter,—does Homer make on the Provost of Eton, when he reads him, the impression of a poet quaint and antiquated? does he make this impression on Professor Thompson or Professor Jowett. When Shakspeare says, "The princes *orgulous*," meaning "the proud princess," we say, "This is antiquated"; when he says of the Trojan gates, that they

> With massy staples
> And corresponsive and fulfilling bolts
> *Sperr* up the sons of Troy,

we say, "This is both quaint and antiquated." But does Homer ever compose in a language which produces on the scholar at all the same impression as this language which I have quoted from Shakspeare? Never once. Shakspeare is quaint and antiquated in the lines which I have just quoted; but Shakspeare—need I say it?—can compose, when he likes, when he is at his best, in a language perfectly simple, perfectly intelligible; in a language which, in spite of the two centuries and a half which part its author from us, stops us or surprises us as little as the language of a contemporary. And Homer has not Shakspeare's variations: Homer always composes as Shakspeare composes at his best; Homer is always simple and intelligible, as Shakspeare is often; Homer is never quaint and antiquated, as Shakspeare is sometimes.

When Mr Newman says that Homer is garrulous, he seems, perhaps, to depart less widely from the common opinion than when he calls him quaint; for is there not Horace's authority for asserting that "the good Homer sometimes nods," *bonus dormitat Homerus?* and a great many people have come, from the currency of this well-known criticism, to represent Homer to themselves as a diffuse old man, with the full-stocked mind, but also with the occasional slips and weaknesses of old age. Horace has said better things than his "bonus dormitat Homerus"; but he never meant by this, as I need not remind anyone who knows the passage, that Homer was garrulous, or anything of the kind. Instead, however, of either discussing what Horace meant, or discussing Homer's garrulity as a general question, I prefer to bring to my mind some style which *is* garrulous, and to ask myself, to ask you, whether anything at all of the impression made by that style is ever made by the style of Homer. The mediæval romancers, for instance, are garrulous; the following, to take out of a thousand instances the first which comes to hand, is in a garrulous manner. It is from the romance of Richard Cœur de Lion.

> Of my tale be not a-wondered !
> The French says he slew an hundred
> (Whereof is made this English saw)
> Or he rested him any thraw.
> Him followed many an English knight
> That eagerly holp him for to fight

and so on. Now the manner of that composition I call garrulous; everyone will feel it to be garrulous; everyone will understand what is meant when it is called garrulous. Then I ask the scholar,—does Homer's manner ever make upon you, I do not say, the same impression of its garrulity as that passage, but does it make, even for one moment, an impression in the slightest way resembling, in the remotest degree akin to, the impression made by that passage of the mediæval poet? I have no fear of the answer.

I follow the same method with Mr Newman's two other epithets, *prosaic* and *low*. "Homer rises and sinks with his subject," says Mr Newman; "is prosaic when it is tame, is low when it is mean." First I say, Homer is never, in any sense, to be with truth called prosaic; he is never to be called low. He does not rise and sink with his subject; on the contrary, his manner invests his subject, whatever his subject be, with nobleness. Then I look for an author of whom it may with truth be said, that he "rises and sinks with his subject, is prosaic when it is tame, is low when it is mean." Defoe is eminently such an author; of Defoe's manner it may with perfect precision be said, that it follows his matter; his lifelike composition takes its character from the facts which it conveys, not from the nobleness of the composer. In *Moll Flanders* and *Colonel Jack*, Defoe is undoubtedly prosaic when his subject is tame, low when his subject is mean. Does Homer's manner in the *Iliad*, I ask the scholar, ever make upon him an impression at all like the impression made by Defoe's manner in *Moll Flanders* and *Colonel Jack?* Does it not, on the contrary, leave him with an impression of nobleness, even when it deals with Thersites or with Irus?

Well then, Homer is neither quaint, nor garrulous, nor prosaic, nor mean: and Mr Newman, in seeing him so, sees him differently from those who are to judge Mr Newman's rendering of him. By pointing out how a wrong conception of Homer affects Mr Newman's translation, I hope to place in still clearer light those four cardinal truths which I pronounce essential for him who would have a right conception of Homer: that Homer is rapid, that he is plain and direct in word and style, that he is plain and direct in his ideas, and that he is noble.

Mr Newman says that in fixing on a style for suitably rendering Homer, as he conceives him, he "alights on the delicate line which separates the *quaint* from the *grotesque*." "I ought to be quaint," he says, "I ought not to be grotesque." This is a most unfortunate sentence. Mr Newman is grotesque, which he himself says he ought not to be; and he ought not to be quaint, which he himself says he ought to be.

"No two persons will agree," says Mr Newman, "as to where the quaint ends and the grotesque begins;" and perhaps this is true. But, in order to avoid all ambiguity in the use of the two words, it is enough to say, that most persons would call an expression which produced on them a very strong sense of its incongruity, and which violently surprised them, *grotesque;* and an expression, which produced on them a slighter sense of its incongruity, and which more gently surprised them, *quaint.* Using the two words in this manner, I say, that when Mr Newman translates Helen's words to Hector in the sixth book,

> *Δᾶερ ἐμεῖο, κυνός κακομηχάνου, ὀκρυοέσσης,*[1]

> O, brother thou of me, who am a mischief-working vixen,
> A numbing horror,

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[1] *Iliad*, vi. 344.

he is grotesque; that is, he expresses himself in a manner which produces on us a very strong sense of its incongruity, and which violently surprises us. I say, again, that when Mr Newman translates the common line,

> Τὴν δ' ἠμείβετ' ἔπειτα μέγας κορυθαίολος Ἕκτωρ,
>
> Great Hector of the motley helm then spake to her responsive,

or the common expression, ἐϋκνήμιδες Ἀχαιοί, "dapper-greaved Achaians," he is quaint; that is, he expresses himself in a manner which produces on us a slighter sense of incongruity, and which more gently surprises us. But violent and gentle surprise are alike far from the scholar's spirit when he reads in Homer κυνὸς κακομηχάνου, or κορυθαίολος Ἕκτωρ, or, ἐϋκνήμιδες Ἀχαιοί. These expressions no more seem odd to him than the simplest expressions in English. He is not more checked by any feeling of strangeness, strong or weak, when he reads them, than when he reads in an English book "the painted savage," or, "the phlegmatic Dutchman." Mr Newman's renderings of them must, therefore, be wrong expressions in a translation of Homer, because they excite in the scholar, their only competent judge, a feeling quite alien to that excited in him by what they profess to render.

Mr Newman, by expressions of this kind, is false to his original in two ways. He is false to him inasmuch as he is ignoble; for a noble air, and a grotesque air, the air of the address

> Δᾶερ ἐμεῖο, κυνὸς κακομηχάνου, ὀκρυοέσσης,

and the air of the address,

> O, brother thou of me, who am a mischief-working vixen,
> A numbing horror,

are just contrary the one to the other: and he is false to him inasmuch as he is odd; for an odd diction like Mr Newman's and a perfectly plain natural diction like Homer's, —"dapper-greaved Achaians" and ἐϋκνήμιδες Ἀχαιοί,—are also just contrary the one to the other. Where, indeed, Mr Newman got his diction, with whom he can have lived, what can be his test of antiquity and rarity for words, are questions which I ask myself with bewilderment. He has prefixed to his translation a list of what he calls "the more antiquated or rarer words" which he has used. In this list appear, on the one hand, such words as *doughty*, *grisly*, *lusty*, *noisome*, *ravin*, which are familiar, one would think, to all the world; on the other hand such words as *bragly*, meaning, Mr Newman tells us, "proudly fine"; *bulkin*, "a calf"; *plump*, a "mass"; and so on. "I am concerned," says Mr Newman, "with the artistic problem of attaining a plausible aspect of moderate antiquity, while remaining easily intelligible." But it seems to me that *lusty* is not antiquated: and that *bragly* is not a word readily understood. That this word, indeed, and *bulkin*, may have "a plausible aspect of moderate antiquity," I admit; but they are "easily intelligible," I deny.

Mr Newman's syntax has, I say it with pleasure, a much more Homeric cast than his vocabulary; his syntax, the mode in which his thought is evolved, although not the actual words in which it is expressed, seems to me right in its general character, and the best feature of his version. It is not artificial or rhetorical like Cowper's syntax or Pope's: it is simple, direct, and natural, and so far it is like Homer's. It fails, however, just where, from the inherent fault of Mr Newman's conception of Homer, one might expect it to fail,—it fails in nobleness. It presents the thought in a way which is something more than unconstrained,—over-familiar; something more than easy,—free and easy. In this respect it is like the movement of Mr Newman's version, like his rhythm; for this, too, fails, in spite of some qualities, by not being noble enough; this, while it avoids the faults of being slow and elaborate, falls into a fault in the opposite direction, and is slip-shod. Homer presents his thought naturally; but when Mr Newman has,

A thousand fires along the plain, *I say*, that night were burning,

he presents his thought familiarly; in a style which may be the genuine style of ballad-poetry, but which is not the style of Homer. Homer moves freely; but when Mr Newman has,

Infatuate! O that thou wert lord to some other army,[1] he gives himself too much freedom; he leaves us too much to do for his rhythm ourselves, instead of giving to us a rhythm like Homer's, easy indeed, but mastering our ear with a fulness of power which is irresistible.

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[1] From the reproachful answer of Ulysses to Agamemnon, who had

I said that a certain style might be the genuine style of ballad-poetry, but yet not the style of Homer. The analogy of the ballad is ever present to Mr Newman's thoughts in considering Homer; and perhaps nothing has more caused his faults than this analogy,—this popular, but, it is time to say, this erroneous analogy. "The moral qualities of Homer's style," says Mr Newman, "being like to those of the English ballad, we need a metre of the same genius. Only those metres, which by the very possession of these qualities are liable to degenerate into *doggerel*, are suitable to reproduce the ancient epic." "The style of Homer," he says, in a passage which I have before quoted, "is direct, popular, forcible, quaint, flowing, garrulous: in all these respects it is similar to the old English ballad." Mr Newman, I need not say, is by no means alone in this opinion. "The most really and truly Homeric of all the creations of the English muse is," says Mr Newman's critic in the *National Review*, "the ballad-poetry of ancient times; and the association between metre and subject is one that it would be true wisdom to preserve." "It is confessed," says Chapman's last editor, Mr Hooper, "that the fourteen-syllable verse" (that is, a ballad-verse) "is peculiarly fitting for Homeric translation." And the editor of Dr Maginn's clever and popular *Homeric Ballads* assumes it as one of his author's greatest and most undisputable merits, that he was "the first who consciously realised to himself the truth that Greek ballads can be really represented in English only by a similar measure."

This proposition that Homer's poetry is *ballad-poetry*, analogous to the well-known ballad-poetry of the English and other nations, has a certain small portion of truth in it, and at one time probably served a useful purpose, when it

proposed an abandonment of their expedition. This is one of the "tonic" passages of the *Iliad*, so I quote it:

Ah, unworthy king, some other inglorious army
Should'st thou command, not rule over *us*, whose portion for ever
Zeus hath made it, from youth right up to age, to be winding
Skeins of grievous wars, till every soul of us perish.

Iliad, xiv. 84.

was employed to discredit the artificial and literary manner in which Pope and his school rendered Homer. But it has been so extravagantly over-used, the mistake which it was useful in combating has so entirely lost the public favour, that it is now much more important to insist on the large part of error contained in it, than to extol its small part of truth. It is time to say plainly that, whatever the admirers of our old ballads may think, the supreme form of epic poetry, the genuine Homeric mould, is not the form of the Ballad of Lord Bateman. I have myself shown the broad difference between Milton's manner and Homer's; but, after a course of Mr Newman and Dr Maginn, I turn round in desperation upon them and upon the balladists who have misled them, and I exclaim: "Compared with you, Milton is Homer's double; there is, whatever you may think, ten thousand times more of the real strain of Homer in

> Blind Thamyris, and blind Mæonides,
> And Tiresias, and Phineus, prophets old,

than in

> Now Christ thee save, thou proud portèr,
> Now Christ thee save and see,[1]

or in

> While the tinker did dine, he had plenty of wine.[2]

For Homer is not only rapid in movement, simple in style, plain in language, natural in thought; he is also, and above all, *noble*. I have advised the translator not to go into the vexed question of Homer's identity. Yet I will just remind him that the grand argument—or rather, not argument, for the matter affords no data for arguing, but the grand source from which conviction, as we read the *Iliad*, keeps pressing in upon us, that there is one poet of the *Iliad*, one Homer—is precisely this nobleness of the poet, this grand manner; we feel that the analogy drawn from other joint compositions does not hold good here, because those works do not bear, like the *Iliad*, the magic stamp of a master; and the moment you have *anything* less than a masterwork, the co-operation or consolidation of several poets becomes possible, for talent is not uncommon;

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[1] From the ballad of *King Estmere*, in Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, i. 69 (edit. of 1767).

[2] *Reliques*, i. 241.

the moment you have *much* less than a masterwork, they become easy, for mediocrity is everywhere. I can imagine fifty Bradies joined with as many Tates to make the New Version of the Psalms. I can imagine several poets having contributed to any one of the old English ballads in Percy's collection. I can imagine several poets, possessing, like Chapman, the Elizabethan vigour and the Elizabethan mannerism, united with Chapman to produce his version of the *Iliad*. I can imagine several poets, with the literary knack of the twelfth century, united to produce the *Nibelungen Lay* in the form in which we have it,—a work which the Germans, in their joy at discovering a national epic of their own, have rated vastly higher than it deserves. And lastly, though Mr Newman's translation of Homer bears the strong mark of his own idiosyncrasy, yet I can imagine Mr Newman and a school of adepts trained by him in his art of poetry, jointly producing that work, so that Aristarchus himself should have difficulty in pronouncing which line was the master's, and which a pupil's. But I cannot imagine several poets, or one poet, joined with Dante in the composition of his *Inferno*, though many poets have taken for their subject a descent into Hell. Many artists, again, have represented Moses; but there is only one Moses of Michael Angelo. So the insurmountable obstacle to believing the *Iliad* a consolidated work of several poets is this: that the work of great masters is unique; and the *Iliad* has a great master's genuine stamp, and that stamp is *the grand style*.

Poets who cannot work in the grand style instinctively seek a style in which their comparative inferiority may feel itself at ease, a manner which may be, so to speak, indulgent to their inequalities. The ballad-style offers to an epic poet, quite unable to fill the canvas of Homer, or Dante, or Milton, a canvas which he is capable of filling. The ballad-measure is quite able to give due effect to the vigour and spirit which its employer, when at his very best, may be able to exhibit; and, when he is not at his best, when he is a little trivial, or a little dull, it will not betray him, it will not bring out his weakness into broad relief. This is a convenience; but it is a convenience which the ballad-style purchases by resigning all pretensions to the highest, to the grand manner. It is true of its movement, as it is *not* true of Homer's, that it is "liable to degenerate into doggerel."

It is true of its "moral qualities," as it is *not* true of Homer's, that "quaintness" and "garrulity" are among them. It is true of its employers, as it is *not* true of Homer, that they "rise and sink with their subject, are prosaic when it is tame, are low when it is mean." For this reason the ballad-style and the ballad-measure are eminently *in*appropriate to render Homer. Homer's manner and movement are always both noble and powerful: the ballad-manner and movement are often either jaunty and smart, so not noble; or jog-trot and humdrum, so not powerful.

The *Nibelungen Lay* affords a good illustration of the qualities of the ballad-manner. Based on grand traditions, which had found expression in a grand lyric poetry, the German epic poem of the *Nibelungen Lay*, though it is interesting, and though it has good passages, is itself anything rather than a grand poem. It is a poem of which the composer is, to speak the truth, a very ordinary mortal, and often, therefore, like other ordinary mortals, very prosy. It is in a measure which eminently adapts itself to this commonplace personality of its composer, which has much the movement of the well-known measures of Tate and Brady, and can jog on, for hundreds of lines at a time, with a level ease which reminds one of Sheridan's saying that easy writing may be often such hard reading. But, instead of occupying myself with the *Nibelungen Lay*, I prefer to look at the ballad-style as directly applied to Homer, in Chapman's version and Mr Newman's, and in the *Homeric Ballads* of Dr Maginn.

First I take Chapman. I have already shown that Chapman's conceits are un-Homeric, and that his rhyme is un-Homeric; I will now show how his manner and movement are un-Homeric. Chapman's diction, I have said, is generally good; but it must be called good with this reserve, that, though it has Homer's plainness and directness, it often offends him who knows Homer, by wanting Homer's nobleness. In a passage which I have already quoted, the address of Zeus to the horses of Achilles, where Homer has,

> ἆ δειλώ, τι σφῶϊ δόμεν Πηλῆϊ ἄνακτι
> θνητῷ; ὑμεῖς δ' ἐστὸν ἀγήρω τ' ἀθανάτω τε!
> ἦ ἵνα δυστήνυισι μετ' ἀνδρσιν ἄλγὲ ἔχητον;[1]

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[1] *Iliad*, xvii. 443.

Chapman has,

> *Poor wretched beasts*, said he,
> Why gave we you to a mortal king, when immortality
> And incapacity of age so dignifies your states?
> Was it to haste[1] the miseries poured out on human fates?

There are many faults in this rendering of Chapman's, but what I particularly wish to notice in it is the expression "Poor wretched beasts," for ἆ δειλώ. This expression just illustrates the difference between the ballad-manner and Homer's. The ballad-manner—Chapman's manner—is, I say, pitched sensibly lower than Homer's. The ballad-manner requires that an expression shall be plain and natural, and then it asks no more. Homer's manner requires that an expression shall be plain and natural, but it also requires that it shall be noble. Ἆ δειλώ is as plain, as simple as "Poor wretched beasts"; but it is also noble, which "Poor wretched beasts" is not. "Poor wretched beasts" is, in truth, a little over-familiar, but this is no objection to it for the ballad-manner; it is good enough for the old English ballad, good enough for the *Nibelungen Lay*, good enough for Chapman's *Iliad*, good enough for Mr Newman's *Iliad*, good enough for Dr Maginn's *Homeric Ballads;* but it is not good enough for Homer.

To feel that Chapman's measure, though natural, is not Homeric; that, though tolerably rapid, it has not Homer's rapidity; that it has a jogging rapidity rather than a flowing rapidity; and a movement familiar rather than nobly easy, one has only, I think, to read half a dozen lines in any part of his version. I prefer to keep as much as possible to passages which I have already noticed, so I will quote the conclusion of the nineteenth book, where Achilles answers his horse Xanthus, who has prophesied his death to him.[2]

> Achilles, far in rage,
> Thus answered him:—It fits not thee thus proudly to presage
> My overthrow. I know myself it is my fate to fall
> Thus far from Phthia; yet that fate shall fail to vent her gall
> Till mine vent thousands.—These words said, he fell to horrid deeds,
> Gave dreadful signal, and forthright made fly his one-hoofed steeds.

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[1] All the editions which I have seen have "haste," but the right reading must certainly be "taste."

[2] *Iliad*, xix. 419.

For what regards the manner of this passage, the words, "Achilles Thus answered him," and "I know myself it is my fate to fall Thus far from Phthia," are in Homer's manner, and all the rest is out of it. But for what regards its movement, who, after being jolted by Chapman through such verse as this,

> These words said, he fell to horrid deeds,
> Gave dreadful signal, and forthright made fly his one-hoofed steeds,

who does not feel the vital difference of the movement of Homer,

> ἦ ῥα, καὶ ἐν πρώτοις ἰάχων ἔχε μώνυχας ἵππους?

To pass from Chapman to Dr Maginn. His *Homeric Ballads* are vigorous and genuine poems in their own way; they are not one continual falsetto, like the pinchbeck *Roman Ballads* of Lord Macaulay; but just because they are ballads in their manner and movement, just because, to use the words of his applauding editor, Dr Maginn has "consciously realised to himself the truth that Greek ballads can be really represented in English only by a similar manner,"—just for this very reason they are not at all Homeric, they have not the least in the world the manner of Homer. There is a celebrated incident in the nineteenth book of the *Odyssey*, the recognition by the old nurse Eurycleia of a scar on the leg of her master Ulysses, who has entered his own hall as an unknown wanderer, and whose feet she has been set to wash. "Then she came near," says Homer, "and began to wash her master; and straightway she recognised a scar which he had got in former days from the white tusk of a wild boar, when he went to Parnassus unto Autolycus and the sons of Autolycus, his mother's father and brethren."[1] This, "really represented" by Dr Maginn, in "a measure similar" to Homer's, becomes:

> And scarcely had she begun to wash
> Ere she was aware of the grisly gash
>   Above his knee that lay.
> It was a wound from a wild boar's tooth,
> All on Parnassus' slope,
> Where he went to hunt in the days of his youth
> With his mother's sire,

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[1] *Odyssey*, xix. 392.

and so on. That is the true ballad-manner, no one can deny; "all on Parnassus' slope" is, I was going to say, the true ballad-slang; but never again shall I be able to read

> *νίζε δ' ἄῤ ἆσσον ἴουσα· ἄναχθ' ἐόν· αὐτίκα δ' ἔγνω*
> *οὐλήν,*

without having the detestable dance of Dr Maginn's

> And scarcely had she begun to wash
> Ere she was aware of the grisly gash,

jigging in my ears, to spoil the effect of Homer, and to torture me. To apply that manner and that rhythm to Homer's incidents, is not to imitate Homer, but to travesty him.

Lastly I come to Mr Newman. His rhythm, like Chapman's and Dr Maginn's, is a ballad-rhythm, but with a modification of his own. "Holding it," he tells us, "as an axiom, that rhyme must be abandoned," he found, on abandoning it, "an unpleasant void until he gave a double ending to the verse." In short, instead of saying

> Good people all with one accord
> Give ear unto my *tale*,

Mr Newman would say

> Good people all with one accord
> Give ear unto my *story*.

A recent American writer[1] gravely observes that for his countrymen this rhythm has a disadvantage in being like the rhythm of the American national air *Yankee Doodle*, and thus provoking ludicrous associations. *Yankee Doodle* is not our national air: for us Mr Newman's rhythm has not this disadvantage. He himself gives us several plausible reasons why this rhythm of his really ought to be successful: let us examine how far it *is* successful.

Mr Newman joins to a bad rhythm so bad a diction that it is difficult to distinguish exactly whether in any given passage it is his words or his measure which produces a total impression of such an unpleasant kind. But with a little attention we may analyse our total impression, and find the share which each element has in producing it. To take the passage which I have so often mentioned, Sarpedon's speech to Glaucus. Mr Newman translates this as follows:

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[1] Mr Marsh, in his *Lectures on the English Language*, New York, 1860, p. 520.

> O gentle friend! if thou and I, from this encounter 'scaping,
> Hereafter might for ever be from Eld and Death exempted
> As heavenly gods, not I in sooth would fight among the foremost,
> Nor liefly thee would I advance to man-ennobling battle.
> Now,—sith ten thousand shapes of Death do anygait pursue us
> Which never mortal may evade, though sly of foot and nimble;—
> Onward! and glory let us earn, or glory yield to someone.
>
> Could all our care elude the gloomy grave
> Which claims no less the fearful than the brave.

I am not going to quote Pope's version over again, but I must remark in passing, how much more, with all Pope's radical difference of manner from Homer, it gives us of the real effect of

> εἰ μὲν γὰρ, πόλεμον περὶ τόνδε φυγόντε

than Mr Newman's lines. And now, why are Mr Newman's lines faulty? They are faulty, first, because, as a matter of diction, the expressions "O gentle friend," "eld," "in sooth," "liefly," "advance," "man-ennobling," "sith," "anygait," and "sly of foot," are all bad; some of them worse than others, but all bad: that is, they all of them as here used excite in the scholar, their sole judge,—excite, I will boldly affirm, in Professor Thompson or Professor Jowett,—a feeling totally different from that excited in them by the words of Homer which these expressions profess to render. The lines are faulty, secondly, because, as a matter of rhythm, any and every line among them has to the ear of the same judges (I affirm it with equal boldness) a movement as unlike Homer's movement in the corresponding line as the single words are unlike Homer's words. Οὔτε κέ σε στέλλοιμι μάχην ἐς κυδιάνειραν,—"Nor liefly thee would I advance to man-ennobling battle;"—for whose ears do those two rhythms produce impressions of, to use Mr Newman's own words, "similar moral genius?"

I will by no means make search in Mr Newman's version for passages likely to raise a laugh; that search, alas! would be far too easy I will quote but one other passage from him, and that a passage where the diction is comparatively inoffensive, in order that disapproval of the words may not unfairly heighten disapproval of the rhythm. The end of the nineteenth book, the answer of Achilles to his horse Xanthus, Mr Newman gives thus:

Chestnut! why bodest death to me? from thee this was not needed.
Myself right surely know alsó, that 'tis my doom to perish,
From mother and from father dear apart, in Troy; but never
Pause will I make of war, until the Trojans be glutted.
  He spake, and yelling, held afront the single-hoofed horses.

Here Mr Newman calls Xanthus *Chestnut*, indeed, as he calls Balius *Spotted*, and Podarga *Spry-foot;* which is as if a Frenchman were to call Miss Nightingale *Mdlle. Rossignol*, or Mr Bright *M. Clair*. And several other expressions, too, "yelling," "held afront," "single-hoofed,"—leave, to say the very least, much to be desired. Still, for Mr Newman, the diction of this passage is pure. All the more clearly appears the profound vice of a rhythm, which, with comparatively few faults of words, can leave a sense of such incurable alienation from Homer's manner as, "Myself right surely know also that 'tis my doom to perish," compared with the *εὖ νύ τοι οἶδα καὶ αὐτὸς, ὅ μοι μόρος ἐνθάδ' ὀλέσθαι* of Homer.

But so deeply seated is the difference between the ballad-manner and Homer's, that even a man of the highest powers, even a man of the greatest vigour of spirit and of true genius—the Coryphæus of balladists, Sir Walter Scott—fails with a manner of this kind to produce an effect at all like the effect of Homer. "I am not so rash," declares Mr Newman, "as to say that if *freedom* be given to rhyme as in Walter Scott's poetry,"—"Walter Scott, by far the most Homeric of our poets," as in another place he calls him,—"a genius may not arise who will translate Homer into the melodies of *Marmion*." "The *truly* classical and *truly* romantic," says Dr Maginn, "are one; the moss-trooping Nestor reappears in the moss-trooping heroes of Percy's *Reliques;*" and a description by Scott, which he quotes, he calls "graphic, and therefore Homeric." He forgets our fourth axiom,—that Homer is not *only* graphic; he is also noble, and has the grand style. Human nature under like circumstances is probably in all stages much the same; and so far it may be said that "the truly classical and the truly romantic are one;" but it is of little use to tell us this, because we know the human nature of other ages only through the representations of them which have come down to us, and the classical and the romantic modes of representation are so far from being "one," that they remain eternally distinct, and have created for us a separation between the two worlds which they respectively represent Therefore to call Nestor the "moss-trooping Nestor" is absurd, because, though Nestor may possibly have been much the same sort of man as many a moss-trooper, he has yet come to us through a mode of representation so unlike that of Percy's *Reliques*, that instead of "reappearing in the moss-trooping heroes" of these poems, he exists in our imagination as something utterly unlike them, and as belonging to another world. So the Greeks in Shakspeare's *Troilus and Cressida* are no longer the Greeks whom we have known in Homer, because they come to us through a mode of representation of the romantic world. But I must not forget Scott.

I suppose that when Scott is in what may be called full ballad swing, no one will hesitate to pronounce his manner neither Homeric nor the grand manner. When he says, for instance,

> I do not rhyme to that dull elf
> Who cannot image to himself,[1]

and so on, any scholar will feel that *this* is not Homer's manner. But let us take Scott's poetry at its best; and when it is at its best, it is undoubtedly very good indeed:

> Tunstall lies dead upon the field,
> His life-blood stains the spotless shield;
> Edmund is down,—my life is reft,—
> The Admiral alone is left.
> Let Stanley charge with spur of fire,—
> With Chester charge, and Lancashire,
> Full upon Scotland's central host,
> Or victory and England's lost.[2]

That is, no doubt, as vigorous as possible, as spirited as possible; it is exceedingly fine poetry. And still I say, it is not in the grand manner, and therefore it is not like Homer's poetry. Now, how shall I make him who doubts this feel that I say true; that these lines of Scott are essentially neither in Homer's style nor in the grand style? I may point out to him that the movement of Scott's lines, while it is rapid, is also at the same time what the French call *saccadé*, its rapidity is "jerky"; whereas Homer's rapidity is a flowing rapidity. But this is something external and material; it is but the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual diversity. I may discuss what, in the abstract, constitutes the grand style; but that sort of general discussion never much helps our judgment of particular instances. I may say that the presence or absence of the grand style can only be spiritually discerned; and this is true, but to plead this looks like evading the difficulty. My best way is to take eminent specimens of the grand style, and to put them side by side with this of Scott. For example, when Homer says:

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[1] *Marmion*, canto vi. 38.

[2] *Marmion*, canto vi. 29.

> *ἀλλά, φίλος, θάνε καὶ σύ· τίη ὀλυφύρεαι οὕτως;*
> *κάτθανε καὶ Πάτροκλος, ὅπερ σέο πολλὸν ἀμείνων,*[1]

that is in the grand style. When Virgil says:

> Disce, puer, virtutem ex me verumque laborem,
> Fortunam ex aliis,[2]

that is in the grand style. When Dante says:

> Lascio lo fele, et vo pei dolci pomi
> Promessi a me per lo verace Duca;
> Ma fino al centro pria convien ch' io tomi,[3]

that is in the grand style. When Milton says:

> His form had yet not lost
> All her original brightness, nor appeared
> Less than archangel ruined, and the excess
> Of glory obscured,[4]

that, finally, is in the grand style. Now let anyone after repeating to himself these four passages, repeat again the passage of Scott, and he will perceive that there is something in style which the four first have in common, and which the last is without; and this something is precisely the grand manner. It is no disrespect to Scott to say that he does not attain to this manner in his poetry; to say so, is merely to say that he is not among the five or six supreme poets of the world. Among these he is not; but, being a man of far greater powers than the ballad-poets, he has tried to give to their instrument a compass and an elevation which it does not naturally possess, in order to enable him to come nearer to the effect of the instrument used by the great epic poets —an instrument which he felt he could not truly use,—and in this attempt he has but imperfectly succeeded. The poetic style of Scott is—(it becomes necessary to say so when it is proposed to "translate Homer into the melodies of *Marmion*")—it is, tried by the highest standard, a bastard epic style; and that is why, out of his own powerful hands, it has had so little success. It is a less natural, and therefore a less good style, than the original ballad-style; while it shares with the ballad-style the inherent incapacity of rising into the grand style, of adequately rendering Homer. Scott is certainly at his best in his battles. Of Homer you could not say this; he is not better in his battles than elsewhere; but even between the battle-pieces of the two there exists all the difference which there is between an able work and a masterpiece.

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[1] "Be content, good friend, die also thou! why lamentest thou thyself on this wise? Patroclus, too, died, who was a far better than thou."—*Iliad*, xxi. 106.

[2] "From me, young man, learn nobleness of soul and true effort: learn success from others."—*Æneid*, xii. 435.

[3] "I leave the gall of bitterness, and I go for the apples of sweetness promised unto me by my faithful Guide; but far as the centre it behoves me first to fall."—*Hell*, xvi. 61.

[4] *Paradise Lost*, i. 591.

> Tunstall lies dead upon the field,
> His life-blood stains the spotless shield:
> Edmund is down,—my life is reft—
> The Admiral alone is left.

—"For not in the hands of Diomede the son of Tydeus rages the spear, to ward off destruction from the Danaans; neither as yet have I heard the voice of the son of Atreus, shouting out of his hated mouth; but the voice of Hector the slayer of men bursts round me, as he cheers on the Trojans; and they with their yellings fill all the plain, overcoming the Achaians in the battle."—I protest that, to my feeling, Homer's performance, even through that pale and far-off shadow of a prose translation, still has a hundred times more of the grand manner about it, than the original poetry of Scott.

Well, then, the ballad-manner and the ballad-measure, whether in the hands of the old ballad-poets, or arranged by Chapman, or arranged by Mr Newman, or, even, arranged by Sir Walter Scott, cannot worthily render Homer. And for one reason: Homer is plain, so are they; Homer is natural, so are they; Homer is spirited, so are they; but Homer is sustainedly noble, and they are not. Homer and they are both of them natural, and therefore touching and stirring; but the grand style, which is Homer's, is something more than touching and stirring; it can form the character, it is edifying. The old English balladist may stir Sir Philip Sidney's heart like a trumpet, and this is much: but Homer, but the few artists in the grand style, can do more; they can refine the raw natural man, they can transmute him. So it is not without cause that I say, and say again, to the translator of Homer: "Never for a moment suffer yourself to forget our fourth fundamental proposition, *Homer is noble*." For it is seen how large a share this nobleness has in producing that general effect of his, which it is the main business of a translator to *re*produce.

I shall have to try your patience yet once more upon this subject, and then my task will be completed. I have shown what the four axioms respecting Homer which I have laid down, exclude, what they bid a translator not to do; I have still to show what they supply, what positive help they can give to the translator in his work. I will even, with their aid, myself try my fortune with some of those passages of Homer which I have already noticed; not indeed with any confidence that I more than others can succeed in adequately rendering Homer, but in the hope of satisfying competent judges, in the hope of making it clear to the future translator, that I at any rate follow a right method, and that, in coming short, I come short from weakness of execution, not from original vice of design. This is why I have so long occupied myself with Mr Newman's version; that, apart from all faults of execution, his original design was wrong, and that he has done us the good service of declaring that design in its naked wrongness. To bad practice he has prefixed the bad theory, which made the practice bad; he has given us a false theory in his preface, and he has exemplified the bad effects of that false theory in his translation. It is because his starting-point is so bad that he runs so badly; and to save others from taking so false a starting-point, may be to save them from running so futile a course.

Mr Newman, indeed, says in his preface, that if anyone dislikes his translation, "he has his easy remedy; to keep aloof from it." But Mr Newman is a writer of considerable and deserved reputation; he is also a Professor of the University of London, an institution which by its position and by its merits acquires every year greater importance. It would be a very grave thing if the authority of so eminent a Professor led his students to misconceive entirely the chief work of the Greek world; that work which, whatever the other works of classical antiquity have to give us, gives it more abundantly than they all. The eccentricity too, the arbitrariness, of which Mr Newman's conception of Homer offers so signal an example, are not a peculiar failing of Mr Newman's own; in varying degrees they are the great defect of English intellect, the great blemish of English literature. Our literature of the eighteenth century, the literature of the school of Dryden, Addison, Pope, Johnson, is a long reaction against this eccentricity, this arbitrariness; that reaction perished by its own faults, and its enemies are left once more masters of the field. It is much more likely that any new English version of Homer will have Mr Newman's faults than Pope's. Our present literature, which is very far, certainly, from having the spirit and power of Elizabethan genius, yet has in its own way these faults, eccentricity, and arbitrariness, quite as much as the Elizabethan literature ever had. They are the cause that, while upon none, perhaps, of the modern literatures has so great a sum of force been expended as upon the English literature, at the present hour this literature, regarded not as an object of mere literary interest but as a living intellectual instrument, ranks only third in European effect and importance among the literatures of Europe; it ranks after the literatures of France and Germany. Of these two literatures, as of the intellect of Europe in general, the main effort, for now many years, has been a *critical* effort; the endeavour, in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science,—to see the object as in itself it really is. But, owing to the presence in English literature of this eccentric and arbitrary spirit, owing to the strong tendency of English writers to bring to the consideration of their object some individual fancy, almost the last thing for which one would come to English literature is just that very thing which now Europe most desires—*criticism*. It is useful to notice any signal manifestation of those faults, which thus limit and impair the action of our literature. And therefore I have pointed out how widely, in translating Homer, a man even of real ability and learning may go astray, unless he brings to the study of this clearest of poets one quality in which our English authors, with all their great gifts, are apt to be somewhat wanting—simple lucidity of mind.

III

HOMER is rapid in his movement, Homer is plain in his words and style, Homer is simple in his ideas, Homer is noble in his manner. Cowper renders him ill because he is slow in his movement, and elaborate in his style; Pope renders him ill because he is artificial both in his style and in his words; Chapman renders him ill because he is fantastic in his ideas; Mr Newman renders him ill because he is odd in his words and ignoble in his manner. All four translators diverge from their original at other points besides those named; but it is at the points thus named that their divergence is greatest. For instance, Cowper's diction is not as Homer's diction, nor his nobleness as Homer's nobleness; but it is in movement and grammatical style that he is most unlike Homer. Pope's rapidity is not of the same sort as Homer's rapidity, nor are his plainness of ideas and his nobleness as Homer's plainness of ideas and nobleness: but it is in the artificial character of his style and diction that he is most unlike Homer. Chapman's movement, words, style, and manner, are often far enough from resembling Homer's movement, words, style, and manner; but it is the fantasticality of his ideas which puts him farthest from resembling Homer. Mr Newman's movement, grammatical style, and ideas, are a thousand times in strong contrast with Homer's; still it is by the oddness of his diction and the ignobleness of his manner that he contrasts with Homer the most violently.

Therefore the translator must not say to himself: "Cowper is noble, Pope is rapid, Chapman has a good diction, Mr Newman has a good cast of sentence; I will avoid Cowper's slowness, Pope's artificiality, Chapman's conceits, Mr Newman's oddity; I will take Cowper's dignified manner, Pope's impetuous movement, Chapman's vocabulary, Mr Newman's syntax, and so make a perfect translation of Homer." Undoubtedly in certain points the versions of Chapman, Cowper, Pope, and Mr Newman, all of them have merit; some of them very high merit, others a lower merit; but even in these points they have none of them precisely the same kind of merit as Homer, and therefore the new translator, even if he can imitate them in their good points, will still not satisfy his judge, the scholar, who asks him for Homer and Homer's kind of merit, or, at least, for as much of them as it is possible to give.

So the translator really has no good model before him for any part of his work, and has to invent everything for himself. He is to be rapid in movement, plain in speech, simple in thought, and noble; and *how* he is to be either rapid, or plain, or simple, or noble, no one yet has shown him. I shall try to-day to establish some practical suggestions which may help the translator of Homer's poetry to comply with the four grand requirements which we make of him.

His version is to be rapid; and of course, to make a man's poetry rapid, as to make it noble, nothing can serve him so much as to have, in his own nature, rapidity and nobleness. *It is the spirit that quickeneth;* and no one will so well render Homer's swift-flowing movement as he who has himself something of the swift-moving spirit of Homer. Yet even this is not quite enough. Pope certainly had a quick and darting spirit, as he had, also, real nobleness; yet Pope does not render the movement of Homer To render this the translator must have, besides his natural qualifications, an appropriate metre.

I have sufficiently shown why I think all forms of our ballad-metre unsuited to Homer. It seems to me to be beyond question that, for epic poetry, only three metres can seriously claim to be accounted capable of the grand style. Two of these will at once occur to everyone,—the ten-syllable, or so-called *heroic*, couplet, and blank verse. I do not add to these the Spenserian stanza, although Dr Maginn, whose metrical eccentricities I have already criticised, pronounces this stanza the one right measure for a translation of Homer. It is enough to observe that if Pope's couplet, with the simple system of correspondences that its rhymes introduce, changes the movement of Homer, in which no such correspondences are found, and is therefore a bad measure for a translator of Homer to employ, Spenser's stanza, with its far more intricate system of correspondences, must change Homer's movement far more profoundly, and must therefore be for the translator a far worse measure than the couplet of Pope. Yet I will say, at the same time, that the verse of Spenser is more fluid, slips more easily and quickly along, than the verse of almost any other English poet.

> By this the northern wagoner had set
> His seven-fold team behind the steadfast star
> That was in ocean waves yet never wet,
> But firm is fixt, and sendeth light from far
> To all that in the wide deep wandering are.[1]

One cannot but feel that English verse has not often moved with the fluidity and sweet ease of these lines. It is possible that it may have been this quality of Spenser's poetry which made Dr Maginn think that the stanza of *The Faery Queen* must be a good measure for rendering Homer. This it is not: Spenser's verse is fluid and rapid, no doubt, but there are more ways than one of being fluid and rapid, and Homer is fluid and rapid in quite another way than Spenser. Spenser's manner is no more Homeric than is the manner of the one modern inheritor of Spenser's beautiful gift,—the poet, who evidently caught from Spenser his sweet and easy slipping movement, and who has exquisitely employed it; a Spenserian genius, nay, a genius by natural endowment richer probably than even Spenser; that light which shines so unexpectedly and without fellow in our century, an Elizabethan born too late, the early lost and admirably gifted Keats.

I say then that there are really but three metres,—the ten-syllable couplet, blank verse, and a third metre which I will not yet name, but which is neither the Spenserian stanza nor any form of ballad-verse,—between which, as vehicles for Homer's poetry, the translator has to make his choice. Everyone will at once remember a thousand passages in which both the ten-syllable couplet and blank verse prove themselves to have nobleness. Undoubtedly the movement and manner of this,

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[1] *The Faery Queen*, canto ii. stanza I.

Still raise for good the supplicating voice,
But leave to Heaven the measure and the choice,

are noble. Undoubtedly, the movement and manner of this:

High on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,

are noble also. But the first is in a rhymed metre; and the unfitness of a rhymed metre for rendering Homer I have already shown. I will observe too, that the fine couplet which I have quoted comes out of a satire, a didactic poem; and that it is in didactic poetry that the ten-syllable couplet has most successfully essayed the grand style. In narrative poetry this metre has succeeded best when it essayed a sensibly lower style, the style of Chaucer, for instance; whose narrative manner, though a very good and sound manner, is certainly neither the grand manner nor the manner of Homer.

The rhymed ten-syllable couplet being thus excluded, blank verse offers itself for the translator's use. The first kind of blank verse which naturally occurs to us is the blank verse of Milton, which has been employed, with more or less modification, by Mr Cary in translating Dante, by Cowper, and by Mr Wright in translating Homer. How noble this metre is in Milton's hands, how completely it shows itself capable of the grand, nay, of the grandest, style, I need not say. To this metre, as used in the *Paradise Lost*, our country owes the glory of having produced one of the only two poetical works in the grand style which are to be found in the modern languages; the *Divine Comedy* of Dante is the other. England and Italy here stand alone; Spain, France, and Germany, have produced great poets, but neither Calderon, nor Corneille, nor Schiller, nor even Goethe, has produced a body of poetry in the true grand style, in the sense in which the style of the body of Homer's poetry, or Pindar's, or Sophocles's, is grand. But Dante has, and so has Milton; and in this respect Milton possesses a distinction which even Shakspeare, undoubtedly the supreme poetical power in our literature, does not share with him. Not a tragedy of Shakspeare but contains passages in the worst of all styles, the affected style; and the grand style, although it may be harsh, or obscure, or cumbrous, or over-laboured, is never affected. In spite, therefore, of objections which may justly be urged against the plan and treatment of the *Paradise Lost*, in spite of its possessing, certainly, a far less enthralling force of interest to attract and to carry forward the reader than the *Iliad* or the *Divine Comedy*, it fully deserves, it can never lose, its immense reputation; for, like the *Iliad* and the *Divine Comedy*, nay, in some respects to a higher degree than either of them, it is in the grand style.

But the grandeur of Milton is one thing, and the grandeur of Homer is another. Homer's movement, I have said again and again, is a flowing, a rapid movement; Milton's, on the other hand, is a laboured, a self-retarding movement. In each case, the movement, the metrical cast, corresponds with the mode of evolution of the thought, with the syntactical cast, and is indeed determined by it. Milton charges himself so full with thought, imagination, knowledge, that his style will hardly contain them. He is too full-stored to show us in much detail one conception, one piece of knowledge; he just shows it to us in a pregnant allusive way, and then he presses on to another; and all this fulness, this pressure, this condensation, this self-constraint, enters into his movement, and makes it what it is,—noble, but difficult and austere. Homer is quite different; he says a thing, and says it to the end, and then begins another, while Milton is trying to press a thousand things into one. So that whereas, in reading Milton, you never lose the sense of laborious and condensed fulness, in reading Homer you never lose the sense of flowing and abounding ease. With Milton line runs into line, and all is straitly bound together: with Homer line runs off from line, and all hurries away onward. Homer begins, Μῆνιν ἄειδε, Θεά,—at the second word announcing the proposed action: Milton begins:

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, heavenly muse.

So chary of a sentence is he, so resolute not to let it escape him till he has crowded into it all he can, that it is not till the thirty-ninth word in the sentence that he will give us the key to it, the word of action, the verb. Milton says:

O for that warning voice, which he, who saw
The Apocalypse, heard cry in heaven aloud.

He is not satisfied, unless he can tell us, all in one sentence, and without permitting himself to actually mention the name, that the man who had the warning voice was the same man who saw the Apocalypse. Homer would have said, "O for that warning voice, which *John* heard"—and if it had suited him to say that John also saw the Apocalypse, he would have given us that in another sentence. The effect of this allusive and compressed manner of Milton is, I need not say, often very powerful; and it is an effect which other great poets have often sought to obtain much in the same way: Dante is full of it, Horace is full of it; but wherever it exists, it is always an un-Homeric effect. "The losses of the heavens," says Horace, "fresh moons speedily repair; we, when we have gone down where the pious Æneas, where the rich Tullus and Ancus are,—*pulvis et umbra sumus.*"[1] He never actually says *where* we go to; he only indicates it by saying that it is that place where Æneas, Tullus, and Ancus are. But Homer, when he has to speak of going down to the grave, says definitely, ἐς 'Ηλύσιον πεδιον—ἀθάνατοι πέμψουσιν[2]—"The immortals shall send thee *to the Elysian plain;*" and it is not till after he has definitely said this, that he adds, that it is there that the abode of departed worthies is placed: ὅθι ξανθὸς 'Ραδάμανθυς—"Where the yellow-haired Rhadamanthus is." Again; Horace, having to say that punishment sooner or later overtakes crime, says it thus:

Raro antecedentem scelestum
Deseruit pede Pœna claudo.[3]

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[1] *Odes*, IV. vii. 13.
[2] *Odyssey*, iv. 563.
[3] *Odes*, III. ii. 31.

The thought itself of these lines is familiar enough to Homer and Hesiod; but neither Homer nor Hesiod, in expressing it, could possibly have so complicated its expression as Horace complicates it, and purposely complicates it, by his use of the word *deseruit*. I say that this complicated evolution of the thought necessarily complicates the movement and rhythm of a poet; and that the Miltonic blank verse, of course the first model of blank verse which suggests itself to an English translator of Homer, bears the strongest marks of such complication, and is therefore entirely unfit to render Homer.

If blank verse is used in translating Homer, it must be a blank verse of which English poetry, naturally swayed much by Milton's treatment of this metre, offers at present hardly any examples. It must not be Cowper's blank verse, who has studied Milton's pregnant manner with such effect, that, having to say of Mr Throckmorton that he spares his avenue, although it is the fashion with other people to cut down theirs, he says that Benevolus " reprieves The obsolete prolixity of shade." It must not be Mr Tennyson's blank verse.

> For all experience is an arch, wherethrough
> Gleams that untravelled world, whose distance fades
> For ever and for ever, as we gaze.

It is no blame to the thought of those lines, which belongs to another order of ideas than Homer's, but it is true, that Homer would certainly have said of them, "It is to consider too curiously to consider so." It is no blame to their rhythm, which belongs to another order of movement than Homer's, but it is true that these three lines by themselves take up nearly as much time as a whole book of the *Iliad*. No; the blank verse used in rendering Homer must be a blank verse of which perhaps the best specimens are to be found in some of the most rapid passages of Shakspeare's plays,—a blank verse which does not dovetail its lines into one another, and which habitually ends its lines with monosyllables. Such a blank verse might no doubt be very rapid in its movement, and might perfectly adapt itself to a thought plainly and directly evolved; and it would be interesting to see it well applied to Homer. But the translator who determines to use it, must not conceal from himself that in order to pour Homer into the mould of this metre, he will have entirely to break him up and melt him down, with the hope of then successfully composing him afresh; and this is a process which is full of risks. It may, no doubt, be the real Homer that issues new from it; it is not certain beforehand that it cannot be the real Homer, as it is certain that from the mould of Pope's couplet or Cowper's Miltonic verse it cannot be the real Homer that will issue; still, the chances of disappointment are great. The result of such an attempt to renovate the old poet may be an Æson; but it may also, and more probably will be a Pelias.

When I say this, I point to the metre which seems to me to give the translator the best chance of preserving the general effect of Homer,—that third metre which I have not yet expressly named, the hexameter. I know all that is said against the use of hexameters in English poetry; but it comes only to this, that, among us, they have not yet been used on any considerable scale with success. *Solvitur ambulando:* this is an objection which can best be met by *producing* good English hexameters. And there is no reason in the nature of the English language why it should not adapt itself to hexameters as well as the German language does; nay, the English language, from its greater rapidity, is in itself better suited than the German for them. The hexameter, whether alone or with the pentameter, possesses a movement, an expression, which no metre hitherto in common use amongst us possesses, and which I am convinced English poetry, as our mental wants multiply, will not always be content to forego. Applied to Homer, this metre affords to the translator the immense support of keeping him more nearly than any other metre to Homer's movement; and, since a poet's movement makes so large a part of his general effect, and to reproduce this general effect is at once the translator's indispensable business and so difficult for him, it is a great thing to have this part of your model's general effect already given you in your metre, instead of having to get it entirely for yourself.

These are general considerations; but there are also one or two particular considerations which confirm me in the opinion that for translating Homer into English verse the hexameter should be used. The most successful attempt hitherto made at rendering Homer into English, the attempt in which Homer's general effect has been best retained, is an attempt made in the hexameter measure. It is a version of the famous lines in the third book of the *Iliad*, which end with that mention of Castor and Pollux from which Mr Ruskin extracts the sentimental consolation already noticed by me. The author is the accomplished Provost of Eton, Dr Hawtrey; and this performance of his must be my excuse for having taken the liberty to single him out for mention, as one of the natural judges of a translation of Homer, along with Professor Thompson and Professor Jowett, whose connection with Greek literature is official. The passage is short[1]; and Dr Hawtrey's version of it is suffused with a pensive grace which is, perhaps, rather more Virgilian than Homeric; still it is the one version of any part of the *Iliad* which in some degree reproduces for me the original effect of Homer: it is the best, and it is in hexameters.

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[1] So short, that I quote it entire:

Clearly the rest I behold of the dark-eyed sons of Achaia;
Known to me well are the faces of all; their names I remember;
Two, two only remain, whom I see not among the commanders,
Castor fleet in the car,—Polydeukes brave with the cestus,—
Own dear brethren of mine,—one parent loved us as infants.
Are they not here in the host, from the shores of loved Lacedæmon,
Or, though they came with the rest in ships that bound through the waters,
Dare they not enter the fight or stand in the council of Heroes,
All for fear of the shame and the taunts my crime has awakened?
So said she;—they long since in Earth's soft arms were reposing,
There, in their own dear land, their Fatherland, Lacedæmon.

English Hexameter Translations, London, 1847, p. 242.

I have changed Dr Hawtrey's "Kastor," "Lakedaimon," back to the familiar "Castor," "Lacedæmon," in obedience to my own rule that everything *odd* is to be avoided in rendering Homer, the most natural and least odd of poets. I see Mr Newman's critic in the *National Review* urges our generation to bear with the unnatural effect of these rewritten Greek names, in the hope that by this means the effect of them may have to the next generation become natural. For my part, I feel no disposition to pass all my own life in the wilderness of pedantry, in order that a posterity which I shall never see may one day enter an orthographical Canaan; and, after all, the real question is this: whether our living apprehension of the Greek world is more checked by meeting in an English book about the Greeks, names not spelt letter for letter as in the original Greek, or by meeting names which make us rub our eyes and call out, "How exceedingly odd!"

The Latin names of the Greek deities raise in most cases the idea of quite distinct personages from the personages whose idea is raised by the Greek names. Hera and Juno are actually, to every scholar's imagination, two different people. So in all these cases the Latin names must, at any inconvenience, be abandoned when we are dealing with the Greek world. But I think it can be in the sensitive imagination of Mr Grote only, that "Thucydides" raises the idea of a different man from Θουκυδίδης.

This is one of the particular considerations that incline me to prefer the hexameter, for translating Homer, to our established metres. There is another. Most of you, probably, have some knowledge of a poem by Mr Clough, *The Bothie of Toper-na-fuosich*, a long-vacation pastoral, in hexameters. The general merits of that poem I am not going to discuss: it is a serio-comic poem, and, therefore, of essentially different nature from the *Iliad*. Still in two things it is, more than any other English poem which I can call to mind, like the *Iliad:* in the rapidity of its movement, and the plainness and directness of its style. The thought of this poem is often curious and subtle, and that is not Homeric; the diction is often grotesque, and that is not Homeric. Still by its rapidity of movement, and plain and direct manner of presenting the thought however curious in itself, this poem, which, being as I say a serio-comic poem, has a right to be grotesque, is grotesque *truly*, not, like Mr Newman's version of the *Iliad*, *falsely*. Mr Clough's odd epithets, "The grave man nicknamed Adam," "The hairy Aldrich," and so on, grow vitally and appear naturally in their place; while Mr Newman's "dapper-greaved Achaians," and "motley-helmed Hector," have all the air of being mechanically elaborated and artificially stuck in. Mr Clough's hexameters are excessively, needlessly rough; still owing to the native rapidity of this measure, and to the directness of style which so well allies itself with it, his composition produces a sense in the reader which Homer's composition also produces, and which Homer's translator ought to *re*-produce,—the sense of having, within short limits of time, a large portion of human life presented to him, instead of a small portion.

Mr Clough's hexameters are, as I have just said, too rough and irregular; and indeed a good model, on any considerable scale, of this metre, the English translator will nowhere find. He must not follow the model offered by Mr Longfellow in his pleasing and popular poem of *Evangeline;* for the merit of the manner and movement of *Evangeline*, when they are at their best, is to be tenderly elegant; and their fault, when they are at their worst, is to be lumbering; but Homer's defect is not lumberingness, neither is tender elegance his excellence. The lumbering effect of most English hexameters is caused by their being much too dactylic;[1] the translator must learn to use spondees freely. Mr Clough has done this, but he has not sufficiently observed another rule which the translator cannot follow too strictly; and that is, to have no lines which will not, as it is familiarly said, *read themselves.* This is of the last importance for rhythms with which the ear of the English public is not thoroughly acquainted. Lord Redesdale, in two papers on the subject of Greek and Roman metres, has some good remarks on the outrageous disregard of quantity in which English verse, trusting to its force of accent, is apt to indulge itself. The predominance of accent in our language is so great, that it would be pedantic not to avail oneself of it; and Lord Redesdale suggests rules which might easily be pushed too far. Still, it is undeniable that in English hexameters we generally force the quantity far too much; we rely on justification by accent with a security which is excessive. But not only do we abuse accent by shortening long syllables and lengthening short ones; we perpetually commit a far worse fault, by requiring the removal of the accent from its natural place to an unnatural one, in order to make our line scan. This is a fault, even when our metre is one which every English reader knows, and when we can see what we want and can correct the rhythm according to our wish; although it is a fault which a great master may sometimes commit knowingly to produce a desired effect, as Milton changes the natural accent on the word *Tiresias* in the line:

And Tíresias and Phineus, prophets old;

and then it ceases to be a fault, and becomes a beauty. But it is a real fault, when Chapman has:

By him the golden-throned Queen slept, the Queen of Deities;

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[1] For instance; in a version (I believe, by the late Mr Lockhart) of Homer's description of the parting of Hector and Andromache, there occurs, in the first five lines, but one spondee besides the necessary spondees in the sixth place; in the corresponding five lines of Homer there occur ten. See *English Hexameter Translations*, 244.

for in this line, to make it scan, you have to take away the accent from the word *Queen*, on which it naturally falls, and to place it on *throned*, which would naturally be unaccented; and yet, after all, you get no peculiar effect or beauty of cadence to reward you. It is a real fault, when Mr Newman has:

> Infatuate! O that thou wert lord to some other army—

for here again the reader is required, not for any special advantage to himself, but simply to save Mr Newman trouble, to place the accent on the insignificant word *wert*, where it has no business whatever. But it is still a greater fault, when Spenser has (to take a striking instance):

> Wot ye why his mother with a veil hath covered his face?

for a hexameter; because here not only is the reader causelessly required to make havoc with the natural accentuation of the line in order to get it to run as a hexameter; but also he, in nine cases out of ten, will be utterly at a loss how to perform the process required, and the line will remain a mere monster for him. I repeat, it is advisable to construct *all* verses so that by reading them naturally—that is, according to the sense and legitimate accent,—the reader gets the right rhythm; but, for English hexameters, that they be so constructed is indispensable.

If the hexameter best helps the translator to the Homeric rapidity, what style may best help him to the Homeric plainness and directness? It is the merit of a metre appropriate to your subject, that it in some degree suggests and carries with itself a style appropriate to the subject; the elaborate and self-retarding style, which comes so naturally when your metre is the Miltonic blank verse, does not come naturally with the hexameter; is, indeed, alien to it. On the other hand, the hexameter has a natural dignity which repels both the jaunty style and the jog-trot style, to both of which the ballad-measure so easily lends itself. These are great advantages; and, perhaps, it is nearly enough to say to the translator who uses the hexameter that he cannot too religiously follow, in style, the inspiration of his metre. He will find that a loose and idiomatic grammar—a grammar which follows the essential rather than the formal logic of the thought—allies itself excellently with the hexameter; and that, while this sort of grammar ensures plainness and naturalness, it by no means comes short in nobleness. It is difficult to pronounce, certainly, what is idiomatic in the ancient literature of a language which, though still spoken, has long since entirely adopted, as modern Greek has adopted, modern idioms. Still one may, I think, clearly perceive that Homer's grammatical style is idiomatic,—that it may even be called, not improperly, a loose grammatical style.[1] Examples, however, of what I mean by a loose grammatical style, will be of more use to the translator if taken from English poetry than if taken from Homer. I call it, then, a loose and idiomatic grammar which Shakspeare uses in the last line of the following three:

> He's here in double trust:
> First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
> *Strong both against the deed;*

or in this:—

> Wit, *whither wilt?*

What Shakspeare means is perfectly clear, clearer, probably, than if he had said it in a more formal and regular manner; but his grammar is loose and idiomatic, because he leaves out the subject of the verb "wilt" in the second passage quoted, and because, in the first, a prodigious addition to the sentence has to be, as we used to say in our old Latin grammar days, *understood*, before the word "both" can be properly parsed. So, again, Chapman's grammar is loose and idiomatic where he says,

> Even share hath he that keeps his tent, and *he to field* doth go,

because he leaves out, in the second clause, the relative which in formal writing would be required. But Chapman here does not lose dignity by this idiomatic way of expressing himself, any more than Shakspeare loses it by neglecting to confer on "both" the blessings of a regular government: neither loses dignity, but each gives that impression of a plain, direct, and natural mode of speaking, which Homer, too, gives, and which it is so important, as I say, that Homer's translator should succeed in giving. Cowper calls blank verse "a style further removed than rhyme from the vernacular idiom, both in the language itself and in the arrangement of it"; and just in proportion as blank verse is removed from the vernacular idiom, from that idiomatic style which is of all styles the plainest and most natural, blank verse is unsuited to render Homer.

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[1] See for instance, in the *Iliad*, the loose construction of δῖτε, xvii. 658; that of ἴδοιτο, xvii. 681; that of οἶτε, xviii. 209; and the elliptical construction at xix. 42, 43; also the idiomatic construction of ἐγὼν ὅδε παρασχεῖν, xix. 140. These instances are all taken within a range of a thousand lines; anyone may easily multiply them for himself.

Shakspeare is not only idiomatic in his grammar or style, he is also idiomatic in his words or diction; and here too, his example is valuable for the translator of Homer. The translator must not, indeed, allow himself all the liberty that Shakspeare allows himself; for Shakspeare sometimes uses expressions which pass perfectly well as he uses them, because Shakspeare thinks so fast and so powerfully, that in reading him we are borne over single words as by a mighty current; but, if our mind were less excited,—and who may rely on exciting our mind like Shakspeare?—they would check us. "To grunt and sweat under a weary load";—that does perfectly well where it comes in Shakspeare; but if the translator of Homer, who will hardly have wound our minds up to the pitch at which these words of Hamlet find them, were to employ, when he has to speak of one of Homer's heroes under the load of calamity, this figure of "grunting" and "sweating" we should say, *He Newmanises*, and his diction would offend us. For he is to be noble; and no plea of wishing to be plain and natural can get him excused from being this: only, as he is to be also, like Homer, perfectly simple and free from artificiality, and as the use of idiomatic expressions undoubtedly gives this effect,[1] he should be as idiomatic as he can be without ceasing to be noble. Therefore the idiomatic language of Shakspeare—such language as, "prate of his *whereabout*";

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[1] Our knowledge of Homer's Greek is hardly such as to enable us to pronounce quite confidently what is idiomatic in his diction, and what is not, any more than in his grammar; but I seem to myself clearly to recognise an idiomatic stamp in such expressions as τολυπεύειν πολέμους, xiv. 86; φάος ἐν νήεσσιν θήῃς, xvi. 94; τν' οἴω ἀσπασίως αὐτῶν λόνυ κάμψειν, xix. 71; κλοτοπεύειν, xix. 149; and many others. The first-quoted expression, τολυπεύειν ἀργαλέους πολέμους, seems to me to have just about the same degree of freedom as the "*jump* the life to come," or the "*shuffle off* this mortal coil," of Shakspeare.

"*jump* the life to come"; "the damnation of his *taking-off*"; "his *quietus make* with a bare *bodkin*"—should be carefully observed by the translator of Homer, although in every case he will have to decide for himself whether the use, by him, of Shakspeare's liberty, will or will not clash with his indispensable duty of nobleness. He will find one English book and one only, where, as in the *Iliad* itself, perfect plainness of speech is allied with perfect nobleness; and that book is the Bible. No one could see this more clearly than Pope saw it: "This pure and noble simplicity," he says, "is nowhere in such perfection as in the Scripture and Homer": yet even with Pope a woman is a "fair," a father is a "sire" and an old man a "reverend sage," and so on through all the phrases of that pseudo-Augustan, and most unbiblical, vocabulary. The Bible, however, is undoubtedly the grand mine of diction for the translator of Homer; and, if he knows how to discriminate truly between what will suit him and what will not, the Bible may afford him also invaluable lessons of style.

I said that Homer, besides being plain in style and diction, was plain in the quality of his thought. It is possible that a thought may be expressed with idiomatic plainness, and yet not be in itself a plain thought. For example, in Mr Clough's poem, already mentioned, the style and diction is almost always idiomatic and plain, but the thought itself is often of a quality which is not plain; it is *curious*. But the grand instance of the union of idiomatic expression with curious or difficult thought is in Shakspeare's poetry. Such, indeed, is the force and power of Shakspeare's idiomatic expression, that it gives an effect of clearness and vividness even to a thought which is imperfect and incoherent; for instance, when Hamlet says,

> To take arms against a sea of troubles,

the figure there is undoubtedly most faulty, it by no means runs on four legs; but the thing is said so freely and idiomatically, that it passes. This, however, is not a point to which I now want to call your attention; I want you to remark, in Shakspeare and others, only that which we may directly apply to Homer. I say, then, that in Shakspeare the thought is often, while most idiomatically uttered, nay, while good and sound in itself, yet of a quality which is curious and difficult; and that this quality of thought is something entirely un-Homeric. For example, when Lady Macbeth says:

> Memory, the warder of the brain,
> Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
> A limbeck only,

this figure is a perfectly sound and correct figure, no doubt; Mr Knight even calls it a "happy" figure; but it is a *difficult* figure: Homer would not have used it. Again, when Lady Macbeth says,

> When you durst do it, then you were a man;
> And, to be more than what you were, you would
> Be so much more the man,

the thought in the two last of these lines is, when you seize it, a perfectly clear thought, and a fine thought; but it is a *curious* thought: Homer would not have used it. These are favourable instances of the union of plain style and words with a thought not plain in quality; but take stronger instances of this union,—let the thought be not only not plain in quality, but highly fanciful: and you have the Elizabethan conceits; you have, in spite of idiomatic style and idiomatic diction, everything which is most un-Homeric; you have such atrocities as this of Chapman:

> Fate shall fail to vent her gall
> Till mine vent thousands.

I say, the poets of a nation which has produced such conceit as that, must purify themselves seven times in the fire before they can hope to render Homer. They must expel their nature with a fork, and keep crying to one another night and day: "Homer not only moves rapidly, not only speaks idiomatically; he is, also, *free from fancifulness.*"

So essentially characteristic of Homer is his plainness and naturalness of thought, that to the preservation of this in his own version the translator must without scruple sacrifice, where it is necessary, verbal fidelity to his original, rather than run any risk of producing, by literalness, an odd and unnatural effect. The double epithets so constantly occurring in Homer must be dealt with according to this rule; these epithets come quite naturally in Homer's poetry; in English poetry they, in nine cases out of ten, come, when literally rendered, quite unnaturally. I will not now discuss why this is so, I assume it as an indisputable fact that it is so; that Homer's *μερόπων ἀνθρώπων* comes to the reader as something perfectly natural, while Mr Newman's "voice-dividing mortals" comes to him as something perfectly unnatural. Well then, as it is Homer's general effect which we are to reproduce, it is to be false to Homer to be so verbally faithful to him as that we lose this effect: and by the English translator Homer's double epithets must be, in many places, renounced altogether; in all places where they are rendered, rendered by equivalents which come naturally. Instead of rendering *Θέτι τανύπεπλε* by Mr Newman's "Thetis trailing-robed," which brings to one's mind long petticoats sweeping a dirty pavement, the translator must render the Greek by English words which come as naturally to us as Milton's words when he says, "Let gorgeous Tragedy With sceptred pall come sweeping by." Instead of rendering *μώνυχας ἵππους* by Chapman's "one-hoofed steeds," or Mr Newman's "single-hoofed horses," he must speak of horses in a way which surprises us as little as Shakspeare surprises when he says, "Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds." Instead of rendering *μελιηδέα θυμόν* by "life as honey pleasant," he must characterise life with the simple pathos of Gray's "warm precincts of the cheerful day." Instead of converting *ποῖόν σε ἔπος φύγεν ἕρκος ὀδόντων*; into the portentous remonstrance, "Betwixt the outwork of thy teeth what word hath split?" he must remonstrate in English as straightforward as this of St Peter, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee"; or as this of the disciples, "What is this that he saith, a little while? we cannot tell what he saith." Homer's Greek, in each of the places quoted, reads as naturally as any of those English passages: the expression no more calls away the attention from the sense in the Greek than in the English. But when, in order to render literally in English one of Homer's double epithets, a strange unfamiliar adjective is invented,—such as "voice dividing" for *μέροψ*,—an improper share of the reader's attention is necessarily diverted to this ancillary word, to this word which Homer never intended should receive so much notice; and a total effect quite different from Homer's is thus produced. Therefore Mr Newman, though he does not purposely import, like Chapman, conceits of his own into the *Iliad*, does actually import them; for the result of his singular diction is to raise ideas, and odd ideas, not raised by the corresponding diction in Homer; and Chapman himself does no more. Cowper says: "I have cautiously avoided all terms of new invention, with an abundance of which persons of more ingenuity than judgment have not enriched our language but encumbered it"; and this criticism so exactly hits the diction of Mr Newman that one is irresistibly led to imagine his present appearance in the flesh to be at least his second.

A translator cannot well have a Homeric rapidity, style, diction, and quality of thought, without at the same time having what is the result of these in Homer,—nobleness. Therefore I do not attempt to lay down any rules for obtaining this effect of nobleness,—the effect, too, of all others the most impalpable, the most irreducible to rule, and which most depends on the individual personality of the artist. So I proceed at once to give you, in conclusion, one or two passages in which I have tried to follow those principles of Homeric translation which I have laid down. I give them, it must be remembered, not as specimens of perfect translation, but as specimens of an attempt to translate Homer on certain principles; specimens which may very aptly illustrate those principles by falling short as well as by succeeding.

I take first a passage of which I have already spoken, the comparison of the Trojan fires to the stars. The first part of that passage is, I have said, of splendid beauty; and to begin with a lame version of that would be the height of imprudence in me. It is the last and more level part with which I shall concern myself. I have already quoted Cowper's version of this part in order to show you how unlike his stiff and Miltonic manner of telling a plain story is to Homer's easy and rapid manner:

> So numerous seemed those fires the bank between
> Of Xanthus, blazing, and the fleet of Greece,
> In prospect all of Troy—

I need not continue to the end. I have also quoted Pope's version of it, to show you how unlike his ornate and artificial manner is to Homer's plain and natural manner:

So many flames before proud Ilion blaze,
And brighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays;
The long reflections of the distant fires
Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires,

and much more of the same kind. I want to show you that it is possible, in a plain passage of this sort, to keep Homer's simplicity without being heavy and dull; and to keep his dignity without bringing in pomp and ornament. "As numerous as are the stars on a clear night," says Homer,

So shone forth, in front of Troy, by the bed of Xanthus,
Between that and the ships, the Trojans' numerous fires.
In the plain there were kindled a thousand fires: by each one
There sat fifty men, in the ruddy light of the fire:
By their chariots stood the steeds, and champed the white barley
While their masters sat by the fire, and waited for Morning.

Here, in order to keep Homer's effect of perfect plainness and directness, I repeat the word "fires" as he repeats *πυρά* without scruple; although in a more elaborate and literary style of poetry this recurrence of the same word would be a fault to be avoided. I omit the epithet of Morning, and whereas Homer says that the steeds "waited for Morning," I prefer to attribute this expectation of Morning to the master and not to the horse. Very likely in this particular, as in any other single particular, I may be wrong: what I wish you to remark is my endeavour after absolute plainness of speech, my care to avoid anything which may the least check or surprise the reader, whom Homer does not check or surprise. Homer's lively personal familiarity with war, and with the war-horse as his master's companion, is such that, as it seems to me, his attributing to the one the other's feelings comes to us quite naturally; but, from a poet without this familiarity, the attribution strikes as a little unnatural; and therefore, as everything the least unnatural is un-Homeric, I avoid it.

Again, in the address of Zeus to the horses of Achilles, Cowper has:

Jove saw their grief with pity, and his brows
Shaking, within himself thus, pensive, said.
        "Ah, hapless pair! wherefore by gift divine
Were ye to Peleus given, a mortal king,
Yourselves immortal and from age exempt?"

There is no want of dignity here, as in the versions of Chapman and Mr Newman, which I have already quoted: but the whole effect is much too slow. Take Pope:

Nor Jove disdained to cast a pitying look
While thus relenting to the steeds he spoke.
"Unhappy coursers of immortal strain!
Exempt from age and deathless now in vain;
Did we your race on mortal man bestow
Only, alas! to share in mortal woe?"

Here there is no want either of dignity or rapidity, but all is too artificial. "Nor Jove disdained," for instance, is a very artificial and literary way of rendering Homer's words and so is, "coursers of immortal strain."

Μυρομένω δ᾽ ἄρα τώ γε ἰδὼν, ἐλέησε Κρονίων.

And with pity the son of Saturn saw them bewailing,
And he shook his head, and thus addressed his own bosom.
"Ah, unhappy pair, to Peleus why did we give you,
To a mortal? but ye are without old age and immortal.
Was it that ye, with man, might have your thousands of sorrows?
For than man, indeed, there breathes no wretcheder creature,
Of all living things, that on earth are breathing and moving."

Here I will observe that the use of "own," in the second line for the last syllable of a dactyl, and the use of "To a," in the fourth, for a complete spondee, though they do not, I think, actually spoil the run of the hexameter, are yet undoubtedly instances of that over-reliance on accent, and too free disregard of quantity, which Lord Redesdale visits with just reprehension.[1]

[1] It must be remembered, however, that, if we disregard quantity too much in constructing English hexameters, we also disregard accent too much in reading Greek hexameters. We read every Greek dactyl so as to make a pure dactyl of it; but, to a Greek, the accent must have hindered many dactyls from sounding as pure dactyls. When we read *αἰόλος ἵππος*, for instance, or *αἰγιόχοιο*, the dactyl in each of these cases is made by us as pure a dactyl as "Tityre," or "dignity"; but to a Greek it was not so. To him *αἰόλος* must have been nearly as impure a dactyl as "death-destined" is to us; and *αἰγιόχ* nearly as impure as the "dressed his own" of my text. Nor, I think, does this right mode of pronouncing the two words at all spoil the run of the line as a hexameter. The effect of *αἰόλλος ἵππος* (or something like that), though not *our* effect, is not a disagreeable one. On the other hand, *κορυθαιόλος* as a paroxytonon, although it has the respectable authority of Liddell and Scott's *Lexicon* (following Heyne), is certainly wrong; for then the word cannot be pronounced without throwing an accent

I now take two longer passages in order to try my method more fully; but I still keep to passages which have already come under our notice. I quoted Chapman's version of some passages in the speech of Hector at his parting with Andromache. One astounding conceit will probably still be in your remembrance,

> When sacred Troy shall *shed her tow'rs for tears of overthrow,*

as a translation of *ὅτ᾽ ἄν ποτ᾽ ὀλώλῃ Ἴλιος ἱρή*. I will quote a few lines which will give you, also, the keynote to the Anglo-Augustan manner of rendering this passage and to the Miltonic manner of rendering it. What Mr Newman's manner of rendering it would be, you can by this time sufficiently imagine for yourselves. Mr Wright,—to quote for once from his meritorious version instead of Cowper's, whose strong and weak points are those of Mr Wright also,—Mr Wright begins his version of this passage thus:

> All these thy anxious cares are also mine,
> Partner beloved; but how could I endure
> The scorn of Trojans and their long-robed wives,
> Should they behold their Hector shrink from war,
> And act the coward's part! Nor doth my soul
> Prompt the base thought.

Ex pede Herculem: you see just what the manner is. Mr Sotheby, on the other hand (to take a disciple of Pope instead of Pope himself), begins thus:

> "What moves thee, moves my mind," brave Hector said,
> "Yet Troy's upbraiding scorn I deeply dread,
> If, like a slave, where chiefs with chiefs engage,
> The warrior Hector fears the war to wage.
> Not thus my heart inclines."

From that specimen, too, you can easily divine what, with such a manner, will become of the whole passage. But Homer has neither

> What moves thee, moves my mind,

nor has he

> All these thy anxious cares are also mine.

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on the first syllable as well as the third, and *μέγας κοῤῥυθαιόλλος Ἕκτωρ* would have been to a Greek as intolerable an ending for a hexameter line as "accurst *orphanhood-destined* houses" would be to us. The best authorities, accordingly, accent *κορυθαίολος* as a proparoxytonon.

Ἦ καὶ ἐμοὶ τάδε πάντα μέλει, γύναι· ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἰνῶς,

that is what Homer has, that is his style and movement, if one could but catch it. Andromache, as you know, has been entreating Hector to defend Troy from within the walls, instead of exposing his life, and, with his own life, the safety of all those dearest to him, by fighting in the open plain. Hector replies:

Woman, I too take thought for this; but then I bethink me
What the Trojan men and Trojan women might murmur,
If like a coward I skulked behind, apart from the battle.
Nor would my own heart let me; my heart, which has bid me be valiant
Always, and always fighting among the first of the Trojans,
Busy for Priam's fame and my own, in spite of the future.
For that day will come, my soul is assured of its coming,
It will come, when sacred Troy shall go to destruction,
Troy, and warlike Priam too, and the people of Priam.
And yet not that grief, which then will be, of the Trojans,
Moves me so much—not Hecuba's grief, nor Priam my father's,
Nor my brethren's, many and brave, who then will be lying
In the bloody dust, beneath the feet of their foemen—
As thy grief, when, in tears, some brazen-coated Achaian
Shall transport thee away, and the day of thy freedom be ended.
Then, perhaps, thou shalt work at the loom of another, in Argos,
Or bear pails to the well of Messeïs, or Hypereia,
Sorely against thy will, by strong Necessity's order.
And some man may say, as he looks and sees thy tears falling:
See, the wife of Hector, that great pre-eminent captain
Of the horsemen of Troy, in the day they fought for their city.
So some man will say; and then thy grief will redouble
At thy want of a man like me, to save thee from bondage.
But let me be dead, and the earth be mounded above me,
Ere I hear thy cries, and thy captivity told of.

The main question, whether or no this version reproduces for him the movement and general effect of Homer better than other versions [1] of the same passage, I leave for the judgment of the scholar. But the particular points, in which the operation of my own rules is manifested, are as follows. In the second line I leave out the epithet of the Trojan women ἑλκεσιπέπλους, altogether. In the sixth line I put in five words "in spite of the future," which are in the original by implication only, and are not there actually expressed. This I do, because Homer, as I have before

[1] Dr Hawtrey also has translated this passage; but here, he has not, I think, been so successful as in his "Helen on the walls of Troy."

said, is so remote from one who reads him in English, that the English translator must be even plainer, if possible, and more unambiguous than Homer himself; the connection of meaning must be even more distinctly marked in the translation than in the original. For in the Greek language itself there is something which brings one nearer to Homer, which gives one a clue to his thought, which makes a hint enough; but in the English language this sense of nearness, this clue, is gone; hints are insufficient, everything must be stated with full distinctness. In the ninth line Homer's epithet for Priam is ἐυμμελίω,—"armed with good ashen spear," say the dictionaries; "ashen-speared," translates Mr Newman, following his own rule to "retain every peculiarity of his original,"—I say, on the other hand, that ἐυμμελίω has not the effect of a "peculiarity" in the original, while "ashen-speared" has the effect of a "peculiarity" in English; and "warlike" is as marking an equivalent as I dare give for ἐυμμελίω, for fear of disturbing the balance of expression in Homer's sentence. In the fourteenth line, again, I translate χαλκοχιτώνων by "brazen-coated." Mr Newman, meaning to be perfectly literal, translates it by "brazen-cloaked," an expression which comes to the reader oddly and unnaturally, while Homer's word comes to him quite naturally; but I venture to go as near to a literal rendering as "brazen-coated," because a "coat of brass" is familiar to us all from the Bible, and familiar, too, as distinctly specified in connection with the wearer. Finally, let me further illustrate from the twentieth line the value which I attach, in a question of diction, to the authority of the Bible. The word "pre-eminent" occurs in that line; I was a little in doubt whether that was not too bookish an expression to be used in rendering Homer, as I can imagine Mr Newman to have been a little in doubt whether his "responsively accosted" for ἀμειβόμενος προσέφη, was not too bookish an expression. Let us both, I say, consult our Bibles: Mr Newman will nowhere find it in his Bible that David, for instance, "*responsively accosted* Goliath;" but I do find in mine that "the right hand of the Lord hath the *pre-eminence;*" and forthwith I use "pre-eminent," without scruple. My Bibliolatry is perhaps excessive; and no doubt a true poetic feeling is the Homeric translator's best guide in the use of words; but where this feeling does not exist, or is at fault, I think he cannot do better than take for a mechanical guide Cruden's *Concordance*. To be sure, here as elsewhere, the consulter must know how to consult,—must know how very slight a variation of word or circumstance makes the difference between an authority in his favour, and an authority which gives him no countenance at all; for instance, the "Great simpleton!" (for *μέγα νήπιος*) of Mr Newman, and the "Thou fool!" of the Bible, are something alike; but "Thou fool!" is very grand, and "Great simpleton!" is an atrocity. So, too, Chapman's "Poor wretched beasts" is pitched many degrees too low; but Shakspeare's "Poor venomous fool, Be angry and dispatch!" is in the grand style.

One more piece of translation and I have done. I will take the passage in which both Chapman and Mr Newman have already so much excited our astonishment, the passage at the end of the nineteenth book of the *Iliad*, the dialogue between Achilles and his horse Xanthus, after the death of Patroclus. Achilles begins:

"Xanthus and Balius both, ye far-famed seed of Podarga!
See that ye bring your master home to the host of the Argives
In some other sort than your last, when the battle is ended;
And not leave him behind, a corpse on the plain, like Patroclus."
    Then, from beneath the yoke, the fleet horse Xanthus addressed him:
Sudden he bowed his head, and all his mane, as he bowed it,
Streamed to the ground by the yoke, escaping from under the collar;
And he was given a voice by the white-armed Goddess Hera.
    "Truly, yet this time will we save thee, mighty Achilles!
But thy day of death is at hand; nor shall *we* be the reason—
No, but the will of heaven, and Fate's invincible power.
For by no slow pace or want of swiftness of ours
Did the Trojans obtain to strip the arms from Patroclus;
But that prince among Gods, the son of the lovely-haired Leto,
Slew him fighting in front of the fray, and glorified Hector.
But, for us, we vie in speed with the breath of the West-Wind,
Which, men say, is the fleetest of winds; 'tis thou who art fated
To lie low in death, by the hand of a God and a Mortal."
    Thus far he; and here his voice was stopped by the Furies.
Then, with a troubled heart, the swift Achilles addressed him:
    "Why dost thou prophesy so my death to me, Xanthus? It needs not.
I of myself know well, that here I am destined to perish,
Far from my father and mother dear: for all that I will not
Stay this hand from fight, till the Trojans are utterly routed."

    So he spake, and drove with a cry his steeds into battle.

Here the only particular remark which I will make is, that in the fourth and eighth line the grammar is what I call loose and idiomatic grammar. In writing a regular and literary style, one would in the fourth line have to repeat before "leave" the words "that ye" from the second line, and to insert the word "do"; and in the eighth line one would not use such an expression as "he was given a voice." But I will make one general remark on the character of my own translations, as I have made so many on that of the translations of others. It is, that over the graver passages there is shed an air somewhat too strenuous and severe, by comparison with that lovely ease and sweetness which Homer, for all his noble and masculine way of thinking, never loses.

Here I stop. I have said so much, because I think that the task of translating Homer into English verse both will be reattempted, and may be reattempted successfully. There are great works composed of parts so disparate that one translator is not likely to have the requisite gifts for poetically rendering all of them. Such are the works of Shakspeare, and Goethe's *Faust*; and these it is best to attempt to render in prose only. People praise Tieck and Schlegel's version of Shakspeare: I, for my part, would sooner read Shakspeare in the French prose translation, and that is saying a great deal; but in the German poet's hands Shakspeare so often gets, especially where he is humorous, an air of what the French call *niaiserie!* and can anything be more un-Shakspearian than that? Again; Mr Hayward's prose translation of the first part of *Faust*—so good that it makes one regret Mr Hayward should have abandoned the line of translation for a kind of literature which is, to say the least, somewhat slight—is not likely to be surpassed by any translation in verse. But poems like the *Iliad*, which, in the main, are in one manner, may hope to find a poetical translator so gifted and so trained as to be able to learn that one manner, and to reproduce it. Only, the poet who would reproduce this must cultivate in himself a Greek virtue by no means common among the moderns in general, and the English in particular,—*moderation*. For Homer has not only the English vigour, he has the Greek grace; and when one observes the boistering, rollicking way in which his English admirers—even men of genius like the late Professor Wilson—love to talk of Homer and his poetry, one cannot help feeling that there is no very deep community of nature between them and the object of their enthusiasm. "It is very well, my good friends," I always imagine Homer saying to them: if he could hear them: "you do me a great deal of honour, but somehow or other you praise me too like barbarians." For Homer's grandeur is not the mixed and turbid grandeur of the great poets of the north, of the authors of *Othello* and *Faust;* it is a perfect, a lovely grandeur. Certainly his poetry has all the energy and power of the poetry of our ruder climates; but it has, besides, the pure lines of an Ionian horizon, the liquid clearness of an Ionian sky.

XI

HOMERIC TRANSLATION IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

A REPLY TO MATTHEW ARNOLD

BY FRANCIS W. NEWMAN

IT is so difficult, amid the press of literature, for a mere versifier and translator to gain notice at all, that an assailant may even do one a service, if he so conduct his assault as to enable the reader to sit in intelligent judgment on the merits of the book assailed. But when the critic deals out to the readers only so much knowledge as may propagate his own contempt of the book, he has undoubtedly immense power to dissuade them from wishing to open it. Mr Arnold writes as openly aiming at this end. He begins by complimenting me, as "a man of great ability and genuine learning"; but on questions of learning, as well as of taste, he puts me down as bluntly, as if he had meant, "a man totally void both of learning and of sagacity." He again and again takes for granted that he has "the scholar" on his side, "the living scholar," the man who has learning and taste without pedantry. He bids me please "the scholars," and go to "the scholars' tribunal"; and does not know that I did this, to the extent of my opportunity, before committing myself to a laborious, expensive and perhaps thankless task. Of course he cannot guess, what is the fact, that scholars of fastidious refinement, but of a judgment which I think far more masculine than Mr Arnold's, have passed a most encouraging sentence on large specimens of my translations. I at this moment count eight such names, though of course I must not here adduce them: nor will I further allude to it, than to say, that I have no such sense either of pride or of despondency, as those are liable to, who are consciously isolated in their taste.

Scholars are the tribunal of Erudition, but of Taste the educated but unlearned public is the only rightful judge;

and to it I wish to appeal. Even scholars collectively have no right, and much less have single scholars, to pronounce a final sentence on questions of taste in their court. Where I differ in Taste from Mr Arnold, it is very difficult to find "the scholars' tribunal," even if I acknowledged its absolute jurisdiction: but as regards Erudition, this difficulty does not occur, and I shall fully reply to the numerous dogmatisms by which he settles the case against me.

But I must first avow to the reader my own moderate pretensions. Mr Arnold begins by instilling two errors which he does not commit himself to assert. He says that my work will *not* take rank as *the* standard translation of Homer, but *other translations will be made:* as if I thought otherwise! If I have set the example of the right direction in which translators ought to aim, of course those who follow me will improve upon me and supersede me. A man would be rash indeed to withhold his version of a poem of fifteen thousand lines, until he had, to his best ability, imparted to them all their final perfection. He might spend the leisure of his life upon it. He would possibly be in his grave before it could see the light. If it then were published, and it was founded on any new principle, there would be no one to defend it from the attacks of ignorance and prejudice. In the nature of the case, his wisdom is to elaborate in the first instance all the high and noble parts *carefully*, and get through the inferior parts *somehow;* leaving of necessity very much to be done in successive editions, if possibly it please general taste sufficiently to reach them. A generous and intelligent critic will test such a work mainly or solely by the most noble parts, and as to the rest, will consider whether the metre and style adapts itself naturally to them also.

Next, Mr Arnold asks, "Who is to assure Mr Newman, that when he has tried to retain every peculiarity of his original, he has done that for which Mr Newman enjoins this to be done—adhered closely to Homer's manner and habit of thought? Evidently the translator needs more practical directions than these." The tendency of this is, to suggest to the reader that I am not aware of the difficulty of rightly applying good principles; whereas I have in this very connection said expressly, that even when a translator has got right principles, he is liable to go wrong in the detail of their application. This is as true of all the principles which Mr Arnold can possibly give, as of those which I have given; nor do I for a moment assume, that in writing fifteen thousand lines of verse I have not made hundreds of blots.

At the same time Mr Arnold has overlooked the point of my remark. Nearly every translator before me has *knowingly purposely*, *habitually* shrunk from Homer's thoughts and Homer's manner. The reader will afterwards see whether Mr Arnold does not justify them in their course. It is not for those who are purposely unfaithful to taunt me with the difficulty of being truly faithful.

I have alleged, and, against Mr Arnold's flat denial, I deliberately repeat, that Homer rises and sinks with his subject, and is often homely or prosaic. I have professed as my principle, to follow my original in this matter. It is unfair to expect of me grandeur in trivial passages. If in any place where Homer is *confessedly* grand and noble, I have marred and ruined his greatness, let me be reproved. But I shall have occasion to protest, that Stateliness is not Grandeur, Picturesqueness is not Stately, Wild Beauty is not to be confounded with Elegance: a Forest has its swamps and brushwood, as well as its tall trees.

The duty of one who *publishes* his censures on me is, to select noble, greatly admired passages, and confront me both with a prose translation of the original (for the public cannot go to the Greek) and also with that which he judges to be a more successful version than mine. Translation being matter of compromise, and being certain to fall below the original, when this is of the highest type of grandeur; the question is not, What translator is perfect? but, Who is least imperfect? Hence the only fair test is by comparison, when comparison is possible. But Mr Arnold has not put me to this test. He has quoted two very short passages, and various single lines, half lines and single words, from me; and chooses to *tell* his readers that I ruin Homer's nobleness, when (if his censure is just) he might make them *feel* it by quoting me upon the most admired pieces. Now with the warmest sincerity I say: If any English reader, after perusing my version of four or five eminently noble passages of sufficient length, side by side with those of other translators, and (better still) with a prose version also, finds in them high qualities which I have destroyed; I am foremost to advise him to shut my book, or to consult it only (as Mr Arnold suggests) as a schoolboy's "help to construe," if such it can be. My sole object is, to bring Homer before the unlearned public: I seek no self-glorification: the sooner I am superseded by a really better translation, the greater will be my pleasure.

It was not until I more closely read Mr Arnold's own versions, that I understood how necessary is his repugnance to mine. I am unwilling to speak of his metrical efforts. I shall not say more than my argument strictly demands. It here suffices to state the simple fact, that for a while I seriously doubted whether he meant his first specimen for metre at all. He seems distinctly to say, he is going to give us English Hexameters; but it was long before I could believe that he had written the following for that metre:

So shone forth, in front of Troy, by the bed of Xanthus,
Between that and the ships, the Trojans' numerous fires.
In the plain there were kindled a thousand fires: by each one
There sate fifty men, in the ruddy light of the fire.
By their chariots stood the steeds, and champ'd the white barley,
While their masters sate by the fire, and waited for Morning.

I sincerely thought, this was meant for prose; at length the two last lines opened my eyes. He *does* mean them for Hexameters! "Fire" (=feuer) with him is a spondee or trochee. The first line, I now see, begins with three (quantitative) spondees, and is meant to be spondaic in the fifth foot. "Bed of, Between, In the,"—are meant for spondees! So are "There sate," "*By* their"; though "Troy *by* the" was a dactyl. "Champ'd the white" is a dactyl. My "metrical exploits" amaze Mr Arnold (p. 223); but my courage is timidity itself compared to his.

His second specimen stands thus:

And with pity the son of Saturn saw them bewailing,
And he shook his head, and thus address'd his own bosom:
Ah, unhappy pair! to Peleus why did we give you,
To a mortal? but ye are without old age and immortal.
Was it that ye with man, might have your thousands of sorrows?
For than man indeed there breathes no wretcheder creature,
Of all living things, that on earth are breathing and moving.

Upon this he apologises for "To a," intended as a spondee in the fourth line, and "-dress'd his own" for a dactyl in the second; liberties which, he admits, go rather far, but "do not actually spoil the run of the hexameter." In a note, he attempts to palliate his deeds by recriminating on Homer, though he will not allow to me the same excuse. The accent (it seems) on the second syllable of *αἰόλος* makes it as impure a dactyl to a Greek as "death-destin'd" is to us! Mr Arnold's erudition in Greek meters is very curious, if he can establish that they take any cognisance *at all* of the prose accent, or that *αἰολος* is quantitatively more or less of a dactyl, according as the prose accent is on one or other syllable. His ear also must be of a very unusual kind, if it makes out that "death-destin'd" is anything but a downright Molossus. Write it *dethdestind*, as it is pronounced, and the eye, equally with the ear, decides it to be of the same type as the word *persistunt*.

In the lines just quoted, most readers will be slow to believe that they have to place an impetus of the voice (an ictus metricus at least) on Bétween, In′ the, Thére sate, By′ their, A′nd with, A′nd he, Tó a, Fór than, O′f all. Here, in the course of thirteen lines, *composed as a specimen of style*, is found the same offence nine times repeated, to say nothing here of other deformities. Now contrast Mr Arnold's severity against me,[1] p. 261: "It is a real fault when Mr Newman has:

> Infátuáte! óh that thou wért | lord to some other army—

for here the reader is required, not for any special advantage to himself, but *simply to save Mr Newman trouble*, to place the accent on the insignificant word *wert*, where it has *no business whatever*." Thus to the flaw which Mr Arnold admits nine times in thirteen pattern lines, he shows no mercy in me, who have toiled through fifteen thousand. Besides, on *wert* we are free at pleasure to place or not to place the accent; but in Mr Arnold's *Bétween*, *Tó a*, etc., it is impossible or offensive.

To avoid a needlessly personal argument, I enlarge on the general question of hexameters. Others, scholars of repute, have given example and authority to English hexameters. As matter of curiosity, as erudite sport, such experiments may have their value. I do not mean to express indiscriminate disapproval, much less contempt. I have myself privately tried the same in Alcaics; and find the chief objection to be, not that the task is impossible, but that to execute it *well* is too difficult for a language like ours, overladen with consonants, and abounding with syllables neither distinctly long nor distinctly short, but of every intermediate length. Singing to a tune was essential to keep even Greek or Roman poetry to true *time;* to the English language it is of tenfold necessity. But if *time* is abandoned (as in fact it always is), and the prose accent has to do duty for the ictus metricus, the moral genius of the metre is fundamentally subverted. What previously was steady duplicate time ("march-time," as Professor Blackie calls it) vacillates between duplicate and triplicate. With Homer, a dactyl had nothing in it *more tripping* than a spondee: a crotchet followed by two quavers belongs to as grave an anthem as two crotchets. But Mr Arnold himself (p. 242) calls the introduction of anapæsts by Dr Maginn into our ballad measure, "a detestable dance": as in:

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[1] He attacks the same line also in p. 235; but I do not claim this as a mark, how free I am from the fault.

> And scarcely hád shĕ bĕgún to wash,
> Ere shé wăs ăwáre ŏf thĕ grisly gash.

I will not assert that this is everywhere improper in the Odyssey; but no part of the Iliad occurs to me in which it is proper, and I have totally excluded it in my own practice. I notice it but once in Mr Gladstone's specimens, and it certainly offends my taste as out of harmony with the gravity of the rest, viz.:

> My ships shall bound ĭn thĕ morning's light.

In Shakspeare we have *i'th'* and *o'th'* for monosyllables, but (so scrupulous am I in the midst of my "atrocities") I never dream of such a liberty myself, much less of avowed "anapæsts." So far do I go in the opposite direction, as to prefer to make such words as *Danai*, *victory* three syllables, which even Mr Gladstone and Pope accept as dissyllabic. Some reviewers have called my metre *lege solutum;* which is as ridiculous a mistake as Horace made concerning Pindar. That, in passing. But surely Mr Arnold's severe blow at Dr Maginn rebounds with double force upon himself.

> To Péleus why′ dĭd wĕ gíve you?—
> Hécŭbă's griéf nor Príăm my̆ fáther's—
> Thoúsănds ŏf sórrows—

cannot be a *less* detestable jig than that of Dr Maginn. And this objection holds against every accentual hexameter, even to those of Longfellow or Lockhart, if applied to grand poetry. For bombast, in a wild whimsical poem, Mr Clough has proved it to be highly appropriate; and I think, the more "rollicking" is Mr Clough (if only I understand the word) the more successful his metre. Mr Arnold himself *feels* what I say against "dactyls," for on this very ground he advises largely superseding them by spondees; and since what he calls a spondee is any pair of syllables of which the former is accentuable, his precept amounts to this, that the hexameter be converted into a line of six accentual trochees, with free liberty left of diversifying it, in any foot except the last, by Dr Maginn's "detestable dance." What more severe condemnation of the metre is imaginable than this mere description gives? "Six trochees" seems to me the worst possible foundation for an English metre. I cannot imagine that Mr Arnold will give the slightest weight to this, as a judgment from me; but I do advise him to search in "Samson Agonistes," "Thalaba," "Kehama," and Shelley's works, for the phenomenon.

I have elsewhere insisted, but I here repeat, that for a long poem a trochaic beginning of the verse is most unnatural and vexatious in English, because so large a number of our sentences begin with unaccented syllables, and the vigour of a trochaic line eminently depends on the purity of its initial trochee. Mr Arnold's feeble trochees already quoted (from *Bétween* to *Tó a*) are all the fatal result of defying the tendencies of our language.

If by happy combination any scholar could compose fifty *such* English hexameters, as would convey a living likeness of the Virgilian metre, I should applaud it as valuable for initiating schoolboys into that metre: but there its utility would end. The method could not be profitably used for translating Homer or Virgil, plainly because it is impossible to say for whose service such a translation would be executed. Those who can read the original will never care to read *through* any translation; and the unlearned look on all, even the best hexameters, whether from Southey, Lockhart or Longfellow, as odd and disagreeable prose. Mr Arnold deprecates appeal to popular taste: well he may! yet if the unlearned are to be our audience, we cannot defy them. I myself, before venturing to print, sought to ascertain how unlearned women and children would accept my verses. I could boast how children and half-educated women have extolled them; how greedily a working man has inquired for them, without knowing who was the translator; but I well know that this is quite insufficient to establish the merits of a translation. It is nevertheless *one* point. "Homer is popular," is one of the very few matters of fact in this controversy on which Mr Arnold and I are agreed. "English hexameters are not popular," is a truth so obvious, that I do not yet believe he will deny it. Therefore, "Hexameters are not the metre for translating Homer." Q. E. D.

I cannot but think that the very respectable scholars who pertinaciously adhere to the notion that English hexameters have something "epical" in them, have no vivid *feeling* of the difference between Accent and Quantity: and this is the less wonderful, since so very few persons have ever actually *heard* quantitative verse. I have; by listening to Hungarian poems, read to me by my friend Mr Francis Pulszky, a native Magyar. He had not finished a single page, before I complained gravely of the monotony. He replied: "So do *we* complain of it:" and then showed me, by turning the pages, that the poet cut the knot which he could not untie, by frequent changes of his metre. Whether it was a change of mere length, as from Iambic senarian to Iambic dimeter; or implied a fundamental change of time, as in music from *common* to *minuet* time; I cannot say. But, to my ear, nothing but a tune can ever save a quantitative metre from hideous monotony. It is like strumming a piece of very simple music on a single note. Nor only so; but the most beautiful of anthems, after it has been repeated a hundred times on a hundred successive verses, begins to pall on the ear. How much more would an entire book of Homer, if chanted at one sitting! I have the conviction, though I will not undertake to impart it to another, that if the living Homer could sing his lines to us, they would at first move in us the same pleasing interest as an elegant and simple melody from an African of the Gold Coast; but that, after hearing twenty lines, we should complain of meagreness, sameness, and *loss of moral expression;* and should judge the style to be *as* inferior to our own oratorical metres, as the music of Pindar to our third-rate modern music. But if the poet, at our request, instead of singing the verses, read or spoke them, then from the loss of well-marked time and the ascendency reassumed by the prose-accent, we should be as helplessly unable to *hear* any metre in them, as are the modern Greeks.

I expect that Mr Arnold will reply to this, that he *reads* and does not *sing* Homer, and yet he finds his verses to be melodious and not monotonous. To this, I retort, that he begins by wilfully pronouncing Greek falsely, according to the laws of *Latin* accent, and artificially assimilating the Homeric to the Virgilian line. Virgil has compromised between the ictus metricus and the prose accent, by exacting that the two coincide in the two last feet and generally forbidding it in the second and third foot. What is called the "feminine cæsura" gives (in the Latin language) coincidence on the third foot. Our extreme familiarity with these laws of compromise enables us to anticipate recurring sounds and satisfies our ear. But the Greek prose accent, by reason of oxytons and paroxytons, and accent on the ante-penultima in spite of a long penultima, totally resists all such compromise; and proves that particular form of melody, which our scholars enjoy in Homer, to be an unhistoric imitation of Virgil.

I am aware, there is a bold theory, whispered if not published, that,—so out-and-out *Æolian* was Homer,—his laws of accent must have been almost Latin. According to this, Erasmus, following the track of Virgil blindly, has taught us to pronounce Euripides and Plato ridiculously ill, but Homer, with an accuracy of accent which puts Aristarchus to shame. This is no place for discussing so difficult a question. Suffice it to say, *first*, that Mr Arnold cannot take refuge in such a theory, since he does not admit that Homer was antiquated to Euripides; *next*, that admitting the theory to him, still the loss of the Digamma destroys to him the true rhythm of Homer. I shall recur to both questions below. I here add, that our English pronunciation even of Virgil often so ruins Virgil's own *quantities*, that there is something either of delusion or of pedantry in our scholars' self-complacency in the rhythm which they elicit.

I think it fortunate for Mr Arnold, that he had *not* "courage to translate Homer"; for he must have failed to make it acceptable to the unlearned. But if the public ear prefers ballad metres, still (Mr Arnold assumes) "the scholar" is with him in this whole controversy. Nevertheless it gradually comes out that neither is this the case, but he himself is in the minority. P. 274, he writes: "When one observes the boistering, rollicking way in which Homer's English admirers—even men of genius, like the late Professor Wilson—love to talk of Homer and his poetry, one cannot help feeling that there is no very deep community of nature between them and the object of their enthusiasm." It does not occur to Mr Arnold that the defect of perception lies with himself, and that Homer has more sides than he has discovered. He deplores that Dr Maginn, and others whom he names, err with me, in believing that our ballad-style is the nearest approximation to that of Homer; and avows that "*it is time to say plainly*" (p. 237) that Homer is not of the ballad-type. So in p. 236, "—this *popular*, but, *it is time to say*, this erroneous analogy" between the ballad and Homer. Since it is reserved for Mr Arnold to turn the tide of opinion; since it is a task not yet achieved, but remains to be achieved by his authoritative enunciation; he confesses that hitherto I have with me the suffrage of scholars. With this confession, a little more diffidence would be becoming, if diffidence were possible to the fanaticism with which he idolises hexameters. P. 261, he says: "The hexameter has a natural dignity, which repels both the jaunty style and the jog-trot style, etc. . . . *The translator who uses it cannot too religiously follow the* INSPIRATION OF HIS METRE," etc. Inspiration from a metre which has no recognised type? from a metre which the *heart* and *soul* of the nation ignores? I believe, if the metre can inspire anything, it is to frolic and gambol with Mr Clough. Mr Arnold's English hexameter cannot be a higher inspiration to him, than the true hexameter was to a Greek: yet that metre inspired strains of totally different essential genius and merit.

But I claim Mr Arnold himself as confessing that our ballad *metre* is epical, when he says that Scott is "*bastard-epic.*" I do not admit that his quotations from Scott are all Scott's best, nor anything like it; but if they were, it would only prove something against Scott's genius or talent, nothing about his metre. The Κύπρια ἔπη or Ἰλίου πέρσις were probably very inferior to the Iliad; but no one would on that account call them or the Frogs and Mice bastard-epic. No one would call a bad tale of Dryden or of Crabbe bastard-epic. The application of the word to Scott virtually concedes what I assert. Mr Arnold also calls Macaulay's ballads "pinchbeck"; but a man needs to produce something very noble himself, before he can afford thus to sneer at Macaulay's "Lars Porsena."

Before I enter on my own "metrical exploits," I must get rid of a disagreeable topic. Mr Arnold's repugnance to them has led him into forms of attack, which I do not know how to characterise. I shall state my complaints as concisely as I can, and so leave them.

1. I do not seek for any similarity of *sound* in an English accentual metre to that of a Greek quantitative metre; besides that Homer writes in a highly vocalised tongue, while ours is overfilled with consonants. I have disowned this notion of similar rhythm in the strongest terms (p. xvii of my Preface), expressly because some critics had imputed this aim to me in the case of Horace. I summed up: "It is not audible sameness of metre, but a likeness of moral genius which is to be aimed at." I contrast the audible to the moral. Mr Arnold suppresses this contrast, and writes as follow, p. 230. "Mr Newman tells us that he has found a metre like in moral genius to Homer's. His judge has still the same answer: 'reproduce THEN *on our ear* something of the effect produced by the *movement* of Homer's.'" He recurs to the same fallacy in p. 243. "For whose EAR do those two *rhythms* produce impressions of (*to use Mr Newman's own words*) 'similar moral genius?'" His reader will naturally suppose that "like in moral genius" is with me an eccentric phrase for "like in musical cadence." The only likeness to the ear which I have admitted, is, that the one and the other are primitively made *for music.* That, Mr Arnold knows, is a matter of fact, whether a ballad be well or ill written. If he pleases, he may hold the rhythm of our metre to be necessarily inferior to Homer's and to his own; but when I fully explained in my preface what were my tests of "like moral genius," I cannot understand his suppressing them, and perverting the sense of my words.

2. In p. 240, Mr Arnold quotes Chapman's translation of ἆ δείλω, "Poor wretched *beasts*" (of Achilles' horses), on which he comments severely. He does *not* quote me.

Yet in p. 269, after exhibiting Cowper's translation of the same passage, he adds: "There is no want of dignity here, as in the versions of Chapman and of *Mr Newman, which I have already quoted.*" Thus he leads the reader to believe that I have the same phrase as Chapman! In fact, my translation is:

> Ha! why on Peleus, mortal prince,
> Bestowed we *you*, unhappy!

If he had done me the justice of quoting, it is possible that some readers would not have thought my rendering intrinsically "wanting in dignity," or less noble than Mr Arnold's own, which is:

> Ah! unhappy pair! to Peleus[1] why did we give you,
> To a mortal?

In p. 240, he with very gratuitous insult remarks, that "Poor wretched beasts" is a little over-familiar; but this is no objection to it for the ballad-manner:[2] *it is good enough . . . for Mr Newman's Iliad*, . . . etc." Yet I myself have *not* thought it good enough for my Iliad.

3. In p. 273, Mr Arnold gives his own translation of the discourse between Achilles and his horse; and prefaces it with the words, "I will take the passage in which both Chapman and Mr Newman *have already so much excited our astonishment.*" But he did *not* quote my translation of the noble part of the passage, consisting of 19 lines; he has merely quoted[3] the tail of it, 5 lines; which are altogether inferior. Of this a sufficient indication is, that Mr Gladstone has translated the 19 and omitted the 5. I shall below give my translation parallel to Mr Gladstone's. The curious reader may compare it with Mr Arnold's, if he choose.

4. In p. 270, Mr Arnold quotes from Chapman as a translation of ὅταν ποτ' ὀλώλῃ Ιλιος ἱρὴ,

"When sacred Troy shall *shed her tow'rs for tears of overthrow;*"

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[1] If I had used such a double dative, as "to Peleus to a mortal," what would he have said of my syntax?

[2] Ballad-*manner!* The prevalent ballad-*metre* is the Common Metre of our Psalm tunes: and yet he assumes that whatever is in this metre must be on the same level. I have professed (Pref. p. x) that our *existing* old ballads are "poor and mean," and are not my pattern.

[3] He has also overlooked the misprint *Trojans*, where I wrote *Troïans* (in three syllables), and has thus spoiled one verse out of the five.

and adds: "What Mr Newman's manner of rendering would be, you can by this time sufficiently imagine for yourselves." *Would be!* Why does he set his readers to "imagine," when in fewer words he could tell them what my version *is?* It stands thus:

> A day, when sacred Ilium | for overthrow is destin'd,—

which may have faults unperceived by me, but is in my opinion far better than Mr Arnold's, and certainly did not deserve to be censured side by side with Chapman's absurdity. I must say plainly; a critic has no right to hide what I have written, and stimulate his readers to despise me by these *indirect* methods.

I proceed to my own metre. It is exhibited in this stanza of Campbell:

> By this the storm grew loud apace:
> The waterwraith was shrieking,
> And in the scowl of heav'n each face
> Grew dark as they were speaking.

Whether I use this metre well or ill, I maintain that it is essentially a noble metre, a popular metre, a metre of great capacity. *It is essentially the national ballad metre*, for the double rhyme is an accident. Of *course* it can be applied to low, as well as to high subjects; else it would *not* be popular: it would *not* be "of a like moral genius" to the Homeric metre, which was available equally for the comic poem *Margites*, for the precepts of Pythagoras, for the pious prosaic hymn of Cleanthes, for the driest prose of a naval catalogue[1], in short, *for all early thought.* Mr Arnold appears to forget, though he cannot be ignorant, that prose-composition is later than Homer, and that in the epical days every initial effort at prose history was carried on in *Homeric doggerel* by the Cyclic poets, who traced the history of Troy *ab ovo* in consecutive chronology. I say, he is merely inadvertent, he cannot be ignorant, that the Homeric *metre*, like my metre, subserves prosaic thought with the utmost facility; but I hold it to be, not inadvertence, but blindness, when he does not see that Homer's τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος is a line of as thoroughly unaffected *oratio pedestris* as any verse of Pythagoras or Horace's Satires. But on diction I defer to speak, till I have finished the topic of metre.

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[1] As a literary curiosity I append the sentence of a learned reviewer concerning this metre of Campbell. "It is a metre fit for introducing anything or translating anything; a metre that *nothing can elevate, or degrade, or improve, or spoil;* in which all subjects will sound alike.. A theorem of Euclid, a leading article from the *Times*, a dialogue from the last new novel, could all be reduced to it with the slightest possible verbal alteration." [Quite true of Greek hexameter or Shakspeare's line. It is a *virtue* in the metres.] "To such a mill all would be grist that came near it, and *in no grain that had once passed through it would human ingenuity ever detect again a characteristic quality.*" This writer is a stout maintainer that English ballad metre is the right one for translating Homer: only, somehow, he shuts his eyes to the fact that Campbell's *is* ballad metre! Sad to say, extravagant and absurd assertions, like these, though anonymous, can, by a parade of learning, do much damage to the sale of a book in verse.

I do not say that any measure is faultless. Every measure has its foible: mine has that fault which every uniform line must have; it is liable to monotony. This is evaded of course, as in the hexameter or rather as in Milton's line, first, by varying the cæsura, secondly, by varying certain feet, within narrow and well understood limits, thirdly, by irregularity in the strength of accents, fourthly, by varying the weight of the unaccented syllables also. All these things are needed, *for the mere sake of breaking uniformity.* I will not here assert that Homer's many marvellous freedoms, such as ἑκηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος, were dictated by this aim, like those in the *Paradise Lost;* but I do say, that it is most unjust, most unintelligent, in critics, to produce *single* lines from me, and criticise them as rough or weak, instead of examining them and presenting them as part of *a mass.* How would Shakspeare stand this sort of test? nay, or Milton? The metrical laws of a long poem cannot be the same as of a sonnet: single verses are organic elements of a great whole. A crag must not be cut like a gem. Mr Arnold should remember Aristotle's maxim, that popular eloquence (and such is Homer's) should be broad, rough and highly coloured, like scene painting, not polished into delicacy like miniature. But I speak now of metre, not yet of diction. In *any* long and popular poem it is a mistake to wish every line to conform severely to a few types; but to claim this of a translator of *Homer* is a doubly unintelligent exaction, when Homer's own liberties transgress all bounds; many of them being feebly disguised by later double spellings, as εἵως, εἷος, invented for his special accommodation.

The Homeric verse has a rhythmical advantage over mine in less rigidity of cæsura. Though the Hexameter was made out of two Doric lines, yet no division of sense, no pause of the voice or thought, is exacted between them. The chasm between two English verses is deeper. Perhaps, on the side of syntax, a *four + three* English metre drives harder towards monotony than Homer's own verse. For other reasons, it lies under a like disadvantage, compared with Milton's metre. The secondary cæsuras possible in the four feet are of course less numerous than those in the five feet, and the three-foot verse has still less variety. To my taste, it is far more pleasing that the short line recur less regularly; just as the parœmiac of Greek anapæsts is less pleasant in the Aristophanic tetrameter, than when it comes frequent but not expected. This is a main reason why I prefer Scott's free metre to my own; yet, without rhyme, I have not found how to use his freedom. Mr Arnold wrongly supposes me to have overlooked his main and just objections to rhyming Homer; viz. that so many Homeric lines are intrinsically made for isolation. In p. ix of my Preface I called it a fatal embarrassment. But the objection applies in its full strength only against Pope's rhymes, not against Walter Scott's.

Mr Gladstone has now laid before the public his own specimens of Homeric translation. Their dates range from 1836 to 1859. It is possible that he has as strong a distaste as Mr Arnold for my version; for he totally ignores the archaic, the rugged, the boisterous element in Homer. But as to metre, he gives me his full suffrage. He has lines with four accents, with three, and a few with two; not one with five. On the whole, his metre, his cadences, his varying rhymes, are those of Scott. He has more trochaic lines than I approve. He is truthful to Homer on many sides; and (such is the delicate grace and variety admitted by the rhyme) his verses are more pleasing than mine. I do not hesitate to say, that if *all* Homer could be put before the public in the same style equally well with his best pieces, a translation executed on my principles could not live in the market at its side; and certainly I should spare my labour. I add, that I myself prefer the former piece which I quote to my own, even while I see his defects: for I hold that his graces, at which I cannot afford to aim, more than make up for his losses. After this confession, I frankly contrast his rendering of the two noblest passages with mine, that the reader may see, what Mr Arnold does not show, my weak and strong sides.

GLADSTONE, Iliad 4, 422

As when the billow gathers fast
  With slow and sullen roar
Beneath the keen northwestern blast
  Against the sounding shore:
First far at sea it rears its crest,
  Then bursts upon the beach,
Or[1] with proud arch and swelling breast,
  Where headlands[1] outward reach,
It smites their strength, and bellowing flings
  Its silver foam afar;
So, stern and thick, the Danaan kings
  And soldiers marched to war.
Each leader gave his men the word;
Each warrior deep in silence heard.
So mute they march'd, thou could'st not ken
They were a mass of speaking men:
And as they strode in martial might,
Their flickering arms shot back the light.
But as at even the folded sheep
  Of some rich master stand,
Ten thousand thick their place they keep,
  And bide the milkman's hand,
And more and more they bleat, the more
  They hear their lamblings cry;
So, from the Trojan host, uproar
  And din rose loud and high.
They were a many-voicêd throng:
  Discordant accents there,
That sound from many a differing tongue,
  Their differing race declare.
These, Mars had kindled for the fight;
Those, starry-ey'd Athenê's might,
And savage Terror and Affright,
And Strife, insatiate of wars,
The sister and the mate of Mars:
Strife, that, a pigmy at her birth,
  By gathering rumour fed,
Soon plants her feet upon the earth,
  And in the heav'n her head.

I add my own rendering of the same; somewhat corrected, but only in the direction of my own principles and against Arnold's.

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[1] I think he has mistaken the *summit* of the wave for a *headland*, and has made a single description into two, by the word *Or:* but I now confine my regard to the metre and general effect of the style.

As when the surges of the deep, by Western blore uphoven,
Against the ever-booming strand dash up in roll successive;
A head of waters swelleth first aloof; then under harried
By the rough bottom, roars aloud; till, hollow at the summit,
Sputtering the briny foam abroad, the huge crest tumbleth over:
So then the lines of Danaï, successive and unceasing,
In battle's close array mov'd on. To his own troops each leader
Gave order: dumbly went the rest (nor mightèst thou discover,
So vast a train of people held a voice within their bosom),
In silence their commanders fearing: all the ranks wellmarshall'd
Were clad in crafty panoply, which glitter'd on their bodies.
Meantime, as sheep within the yard of some great cattle-master,
While the white milk is drain'd from them, stand round in number countless,
And, grievèd by their lambs' complaint, respond with bleat incessant;
So then along their ample host arose the Troian hurly.
For neither common words spake théy, nor kindred accent utter'd;
But mingled was the tongue of men from divers places summon'd.
By Arès these were urgèd on, those by grey-ey'd Athenè,
By Fear, by Panic, and by Strife immeasurably eager,
The sister and companion[1] of hero-slaying Arês,
Who truly doth at first her crest but humble rear; thereafter,
Planting upon the ground her feet, her head in heaven fixeth.

GLADSTONE, Iliad 19, 403.

Hanging low his auburn head,
  Sweeping with his mane the ground,
From beneath his collar shed,
  Xanthus, hark! a voice hath found,
Xanthus of the flashing feet:
Whitearm'd Herè gave the sound.
"Lord Achilles, strong and fleet!
Trust us, we will bear thee home;
Yet cometh nigh thy day of doom:
No doom of ours, but doom that stands
By God and mighty Fate's commands.
'Twas not that we were slow or slack
Patroclus lay a corpse, his back
All stript of arms by Trojan hands.
The prince of gods, whom Leto bare,
Leto with the flowing hair,
He forward fighting did the deed,
And gave to Hector glory's meed.
In toil for thee, we will not shun
Against e'en Zephyr's breath to run,

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[1] *Companion*, in four syllables, is in Shakspeare's style; with whom habitually the termination *-tion* is two.

Swiftest of winds: but all in vain:
By God and man shalt thou be slain."
He spake: and here, his words among,
Erinnys bound his faltering tongue.

Beginning with Achilles' speech, I render the passage parallel to Gladstone thus.

"*Chestnut* and *Spotted!* noble pair! farfamous brood of *Spry-foot!*
In other guise now ponder ye your charioteer to rescue
Back to the troop of Danaï, when we have done with battle:
Nor leave him dead upon the field, as late ye left Patroclus."
But him the dapplefooted steed under the yoke accosted;
(And droop'd his auburn head aside straightway; and through the collar,
His full mane, streaming to the ground, over the yoke was scatter'd:
Him Juno, whitearm'd goddess, then with voice of man endowèd):
"Now and again we verily will save and more than save thee,
Dreadful Achilles! yet for thee the deadly day approacheth.
Not ours the guilt; but mighty God and stubborn Fate are guilty.
Not by the slowness of our feet or dulness of our spirit
The Troians did thy armour strip from shoulders of Patroclus;
But the exalted god, for whom brighthair'd Latona travail'd,
Slew him amid the foremost rank and glory gave to Hector.
Now we, in coursing, pace would keep even with breeze of Zephyr,
Which speediest they say to be: but for thyself 'tis fated
By hand of hero and of God in mighty strife to perish."
So much he spake: thereat his voice the Furies stopp'd for ever.

Now if any fool ask, Why does not Mr Gladstone translate *all* Homer? any fool can reply with me, Because he is Chancellor of the Exchequer. A man who has talents and acquirements adequate to translate Homer *well* into *rhyme*, is almost certain to have other far more urgent calls for the exercise of such talents.

So much of metre. At length I come to the topic of Diction, where Mr Arnold and I are at variance not only as to taste, but as to the main facts of Greek literature. I had called Homer's style quaint and garrulous; and said that he rises and falls with his subject, being prosaic when it is tame, and low when it is mean. I added no proof; for I did not dream that it was needed. Mr Arnold not only absolutely denies all this, and denies it without proof; but adds, that these assertions prove my incompetence, and account for my total and conspicuous failure. His whole attack upon my diction is grounded on a passage which I must quote at length; for it is so confused in logic, that I may otherwise be thought to garble it, pp. 230, 231.

"Mr Newman speaks of the more antiquated style suited to this subject. Quaint! Antiquated! but to whom? Sir Thomas Browne is quaint, and the diction of Chaucer is antiquated: does Mr Newman suppose that Homer seemed quaint to Sophocles, as Chaucer's diction seems antiquated to us? But we cannot really know, I confess (!!), how Homer seemed to Sophocles. Well then, to those who can tell us how he seems to them, to the living scholar, to our only present witness on this matter—does Homer make on the Provost of Eton, when he reads him, the impression of a poet quaint and antiquated! does he make this impression on Professor Thompson or Professor Jowett? When Shakspeare says, 'The Princes orgulous,' meaning 'the proud princes,' we say, 'This is antiquated.' When he says of the Trojan gates, that they,

> With massy staples
> And corresponsive and fulfilling bolts
> *Sperr* up the sons of Troy,

we say, 'This is both quaint and antiquated.' But does Homer ever compose in a language, which produces on the scholar at all the same impression as this language which I have quoted from Shakspeare? Never once. Shakspeare is quaint and antiquated in the lines I have just quoted; but Shakspeare, need I say it? can compose, when he likes, when he is at his best, in a language perfectly simple, perfectly intelligible; in a language, which, in spite of the two centuries and a half which part its author from us, stops or surprises us as little as the language of a contemporary. And Homer has not Shakspeare's variations. Homer always composes, as Shakspeare composes at his best. Homer is always simple and intelligible, as Shakspeare is often; Homer is never quaint and antiquated, as Shakspeare is sometimes."

If Mr Arnold were to lay before none but Oxford students assertions concerning Greek literature so startlingly erroneous as are here contained, it would not concern me to refute or protest against them. The young men who read Homer and Sophocles and Thucydides, nay, the boys who read Homer and Xenophon, would know his statements to be against the most notorious and elementary fact: and the Professors, whom he quotes, would only lose credit, if they sanctioned the use he makes of their names. But when he publishes the book for the unlearned in Greek, among whom I must include a great number of editors of magazines, I find Mr Arnold to do a public wrong to literature, and a private wrong to my book. If I am silent, such editors may easily believe that I have made an enormous blunder in treating the dialect of Homer as antiquated. If those who are ostensibly scholars, thus assail my version, and the great majority of magazines and reviews ignore it, its existence can never become known to the public; or it will exist not to be read, but to be despised without being opened; and it must perish as many meritorious books perish. I but lately picked up, new, and for a fraction of its price, at a second-hand stall, a translation of the Iliad by T. S. Brandreth, Esq. (Pickering, London), into Cowper's metre, which is, as I judge, immensely superior to Cowper. Its date is 1846: I had never heard of it. It seems to have perished uncriticised, unreproved, unwept, unknown. I do not wish my progeny to die of neglect, though I am willing that it should be slain in battle. However, just because I address myself to the public *unlearned* in Greek, and because Mr Arnold lays before *them* a new, paradoxical, monstrously erroneous representation of facts, with the avowed object of staying the plague of my Homer; I am forced to reply to him.

Knowingly or unknowingly, he leads his readers to confuse four different questions: 1. whether Homer is thoroughly intelligible to modern scholars; 2. whether Homer was antiquated to the Athenians of Themistocles and Pericles; 3. whether he was thoroughly understood by them; 4. whether he is, absolutely, an antique poet.

I feel it rather odd, that Mr Arnold begins by complimenting me with "genuine learning," and proceeds to appeal from me to the "living scholar." (What if I were bluntly to reply: "Well! I am the living scholar"?) After starting the question, how Homer's style appeared to Sophocles, he suddenly enters a plea, under form of a concession ["I confess"!], as a pretence for carrying the cause into a new court, that of the Provost of Eton and two Professors, into which court I have no admission; and then, of his own will, pronounces a sentence in the name of these learned men. Whether they are pleased with this parading of their name in behalf of paradoxical error, I may well doubt: and until they indorse it themselves, I shall treat Mr Arnold's process as a piece of forgery. But, be this as it may, I cannot allow him to "confess" for me against me: let him confess for himself that he does not know, and not for me, who know perfectly well, whether Homer seemed quaint or antiquated to Sophocles. Of course he did, as every beginner must know. Why, if I were to write *mon* for *man*, *londis* for *lands*, *nesties* for *nests*, *libbard* for *leopard*, *muchel* for *much*, *nap* for *snap*, *green-wood shaw* for *green-wood shade*, Mr Arnold would call me antiquated, although every word would be intelligible. Can he possibly be ignorant, that this exhibits but the smallest part of the chasm which separates the Homeric dialect not merely from the Attic prose, but from Æschylus when he borrows most from Homer? Every sentence of Homer was more or less antiquated to Sophocles, who could no more help feeling at every instant the foreign and antiquated character of the poetry, than an Englishman can help feeling the same in reading Burns' poems. Would *mon*, *londis*, *libbard*, *withouten*, *muchel* be antiquated or foreign, and are Πηληϊάδαο for Πηλείδου, ὀσσάτιος for ὅσος, ἠΰτε for ὡς, στήῃ for στῇ, τεκέεσσι for τέκνοις, τοῖσδεσσι for τοῖσδε, πολέες for πολλοὶ, μεσσηγὺς for μεταξὺ, αἶα for λῆ, εἴβω for λείβω, and five hundred others, less antiquated or less foreign? Homer has archaisms in every variety; some rather recent to the Athenians, and carrying their minds back only to Solon, as βασιλῆος for βασίλεως; others harsher, yet varying as dialect still, as ξεῖνος for ξένος, τίε for ἐτίμα, ἀνθεμόεις for ἀνθηρὸς, κέκλυθι for κλύε or ἄκουσον. θαμὺς for θαμινὸς or συχνὸς, ναιετάοντες for ναίοντες or οἰκοῦντες: others varying in the root, like a new language, as ἄφενος for πλοῦτος, ἰότης for βούλημα, τῆ for δέξαι, under which head are heaps of strange words, as ἀκὴν, χώομαι, βιὸς, κῆλα, μέμβλωκε, γέντο, πέπον, etc. etc. Finally comes a goodly lot of words which to this day are most uncertain in sense. My learned colleague Mr Malden has printed a paper on Homeric words, misunderstood by the later poets. Buttmann has written an octavo volume (I have the English translation, *containing 548 pages*) to discuss 106 ill-explained Homeric words.

Some of these Sophocles may have understood, though we do not; but even if so, they were not the less antiquated to him. If there has been any perfect traditional understanding of Homer, we should not need to deal with so many words by elaborate argument. On the face of the Iliad alone every learner must know how many difficult adjectives occur: I write down on the spur of the moment and without reference, κρήγυον, ἀργὸς, ἀδινὸς, ἄητος, αἴητος, νώροψ, ἤνοψ, εἰλίποδες, ἕλιξ ἑλικῶπες, ἔλλοπες, μέροπες, ἠλίβατος, ἠλέκτωρ, αἰγίλιψ, σιγαλόεις, ἰόμωρος, ἐγχεσίμωρος, πέπονες, ἠθεῖος. If Mr Arnold thought himself wiser than all the world of Greek scholars, he would not appeal to them, but would surely enlighten us all: he would tell me, for instance, what ἔλλοπες means, which Liddell and Scott do not pretend to understand; or ἠθεῖος, of which they give three different explanations. But he does not write as claiming an independent opinion, when he flatly opposes me and sets me down; he does but use surreptitiously the name of the "living scholar" against me.

But I have only begun to describe the marked chasm often separating Homer's dialect from everything Attic. It has a wide diversity of grammatical inflections, far beyond such vowel changes of dialect as answer to our provincial pronunciations. This begins with new case-endings to the nouns; in -θι, -θεν, -δε, -φι, proceeds to very peculiar pronominal forms, and then to strange or irregular verbal inflections, infinitives in -μεν, -μεναι, imperfects in -εσκε, presents in -αθω, and an immensity of strange adverbs and conjunctions. In Thiersch's Greek Grammar, after the Accidence of common Greek is added as supplement an Homeric Grammar: and in it the Homeric Noun and Verb occupy (in the English Translation) 206 octavo pages. Who ever heard of a Spenserian Grammar? How many pages could be needed to explain Chaucer's grammatical deviations from modern English? The bare fact of Thiersch having written so copious a grammar will enable even the unlearned to understand the monstrous misrepresentation of Homer's dialect, on which Mr Arnold has based his condemnation of my Homeric diction. Not wishing to face the plain and undeniable facts which I have here recounted, Mr Arnold makes a "confession" that we know nothing about them! and then appeals to three learned men whether Homer is antiquated to *them;* and expounds this to mean, *intelligible to them!* Well: if they have learned *modern* Greek, of course they may understand it; but Attic Greek alone will not teach it to them. Neither will it teach them *Homer's* Greek. The difference of the two is in some directions so vast, that they may deserve to be called two languages as much as Portuguese and Spanish.

Much as I have written, a large side of the argument remains still untouched. The orthography of Homer was revolutionised in adapting it to Hellenic use, and in the process not only were the grammatical forms tampered with, but at least one consonant was suppressed. I am sure Mr Arnold has heard of the Digamma, though he does not see it in the current Homeric text. By the re-establishment of this letter, no small addition would be made to the "oddity" of the sound to the ears of Sophocles. That the unlearned in Greek may understand this, I add, that what with us is written *eoika*, *oikon*, *oinos*, *hekas*, *eorga*, *eeipe*, *eleliχθη*, were with the poet *wewoika*, *wīkon*, *wīnos*, *wekas* (or *swekas?*), *weworga*, *eweipe*, *eweliχθη*;[1] and so with very many other words, in which either the metre or the grammatical formation helps us to detect a lost consonant, and the analogy of other dialects or languages assures us that it is *w* which has been lost. Nor is this all; but in certain words *sw* seems to have vanished. What in our text is *hoi*, *heos*, *hekuros*, were probably *woi* and *swoi*, *weos* and *sweos*, *swekuros*. Moreover the received spelling of many other words is corrupt: for instance, *deos*, *deidoika*, *eddeisen*, *periddeisas*, *addees*. The true root must have had the form *dwe* or *dre* or *dhe*. That the consonant lost was really *w*, is asserted by Benfey from the Sanscrit *dvish*. Hence the true forms are *dweos*, *dedwoika*, *edweisen*, etc. . . . Next, the initial *l* of Homer had in some words a stronger pronunciation, whether λλ or χλ, as in λλιταὶ, λλίσσομαι, λλωτὸς, λλιτανεύω. I have met with the opinion that the consonant lost in *anax* is not *w* but *k;* and that Homer's *kanax* is connected with English *king*. The relations of *wergon*, *weworga*, *wrexai*, to English *work* and *wrought* must strike everyone; but I do not here press the phenomena of the Homeric *r* (although it became *br* in strong Æolism), because they do not differ from those in Attic. The Attic forms εἴληφα, εἴλεγμαι for λέληφα, etc., point to a time when the initial λ of the roots was a double letter. A root λλαβ would explain Homer's ἔλλαβε. If λλ[1] approached to its Welsh sound, that is, to χλ, it is not wonderful that such a pronunciation as οφρᾶ λλαβωμεν was possible: but it is singular that the ὕδατι χλιαρῷ of Attic is written λιαρῷ̆ in our Homeric text, though the metre needs a double consonant. Such phenomena as χλιαρὸς and λιαρὸς, εἴβω and λειβω, ἴα and μία, εἵμαρμαι and ἔμμορε, αἶα and γαῖα, γέντο for ἕλετο, ἰωκὴ and ἴωξις with διώκω, need to be reconsidered in connection. The εἰς ἅλα ἆλτο of our Homer was perhaps εἰς ἅλα σάλλτο: when λλ was changed into λ, they compensated by circumflexing the vowel. I might add the query, Is it so certain that his θεαων was *θeāwōn*, and not *θeārōn*, analogous to Latin *dearum?* But dropping here everything that has the slightest uncertainty, the mere restoration of the *w* where it is most necessary, makes a startling addition to the antiquated sound of the Homeric text. The reciters of Homer in Athens must have dropped the *w*, since it is never written. Nor indeed would Sophocles have introduced in his *Trachiniæ*, ἁ δέ οἱ φίλα δάμαρ . . . leaving a hiatus most offensive to the Attics, in mere imitation of Homer, if he had been accustomed to hear from the reciters, *de woi* or *de swoi*. In other words also, as in οὐλόμενος for ὀλόμενος, later poets have slavishly followed Homer into irregularities suggested by his peculiar metre. Whether Homer's ᾶθανατος, αμμορος . . . rose out of αυθάνατος, ἄυμορος . . . is wholly unimportant when we remember his ¯Απόλλωνος.

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[1] By corrupting the past tenses of *welisso* into a false similarity to the past tenses of *elelizo*, the old editors superimposed a new and false sense on the latter verb; which still holds its place in our dictionaries, as it deceived the Greeks themselves.

But this leads to remark on the acuteness of Mr Arnold's ear. I need not ask whether he recites the A differently in ˘Αρες, ″Αρες, and in, ˘Απόλλων ¯Απολλωνος. He will not allow anything antiquated in Homer; and therefore it is certain that he recites,

αιδοιος τε μοι εσσι, φιλε εκυρε, δεινος τε

and—ουδε εοικε—

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[1] That λλ *in Attic* was sounded like French *l mouillée*, is judged probable by the learned writer of the article L (Penny Cyclop.), who urges that μᾶλλον is for μάλιον, and compares φυλλο with *folio*, αλλο with *alio*, ἀλλ with *sali*.

as they are printed, and admires the rhythm. When he endures with exemplary patience such hiatuses, such dactyls as *ἐεκυ*, *ουδεε*, such a spondee as *ϱε δει*, I can hardly wonder at his complacency in his own spondees "Between," "To a." He finds nothing wrong in *ϰαι πεδια λωτευντα* or *πολλα λισσομενη*. But Homer sang,

> *φιλε ςωεϰυϱε δωεινος τε—ουδε ωεωοιϰε—*
> *ϰαι πεδια λλωτευντα . . . πολλα λλισσομενη.*

Mr Arnold is not satisfied with destroying Quantity alone. After theoretically substituting Accent for it in his hexameters, he robs us of Accent also; and presents to us the syllables "to a," *both short* and *both necessarily unaccented*, for a Spondee, in a pattern piece seven lines long, and with an express and gratuitous remark, that in using "to a" for a Spondee, he has perhaps relied too much on accent. I hold up these phenomena in Mr Arnold as a warning to all scholars, of the pit of delusion into which they will fall, if they allow themselves to talk fine about the "Homeric rhythm" *as now heard*, and the duty of a translator to reproduce something of it.

It is not merely the sound and the metre of Homer, which are impaired by the loss of his radical *w;* in extreme cases the sense also is confused. Thus if a scholar be asked, what is the meaning of *ἐείσατο* in the Iliad? he will have to reply: If it stands for *eweisato*, it means, "he was like," and is related to the English root *wis* and *wit*, Germ. *wiss*, Lat. *vid;* but it may also mean "he went"—a very eccentric Homerism,—in which case we should perhaps write it *eyeisato*, as in old English we have *he yode* or *yede* instead of *he goed*, *gaed*, since too the current root in Greek and Latin *i* (go) may be accepted as *ye*, answering to German *geh*, English *go*. Thus two words, *eweisato*, "he was like," *eyeisato*, "he went," are confounded in our text. I will add, that in the Homeric

> —*ἦϋτε ωέθνεα* (*y*)*εῖσι*—(*Il.* 2, 87)
> —*διὰ πϱὸ δὲ* (*y*)*εὶσατο ϰαὶ τῇς* (*Il.* 4, 138)

my ear misses the consonant, though Mr Arnold's (it seems) does not. If we were ordered to read *dat ting* in Chaucer for *that thing*, it would at first "surprise" us as "grotesque," but after this objection had vanished, we should still feel it "antiquated." The confusion of *thick* and *tick*, *thread* and *tread*, may illustrate the possible effect of dropping the *w* in Homer. I observe that Benfey's Greek Root Lexicon has a list of 454 digammated words, most of which are Homeric. But it is quite needless to press the argument to its full.

If as much learning had been spent on the double λ and on the *y* and *h* of Homer, as on the digamma, it might perhaps now be conceded that we have lost, not one, but three or four consonants from his text. That λ in λύω or λούω was ever a complex sound in Greek, I see nothing to indicate; hence *that* λ, and the λ of λιταὶ, λιαρὸς, seem to have been different consonants in Homer, as *l* and *ll* in Welsh. As to *h* and *y* I assert nothing, except that critics appear too hastily to infer, that if a consonant has disappeared, it must needs be *w*. It is credible that the Greek *h* was once strong enough to stop hiatus or elision, as the English, and much more the Asiatic *h*. The later Greeks, after turning the character H into a vowel, seem to have had no idea of a consonant *h* in the middle of a word, nor any means of writing the consonant *y*. Since G passes through *gh* into the sounds *h*, *w*, *y*, *f* (as in English and German is obvious), it is easy to confound them all under the compendious word "digamma." I should be glad to know that Homer's forms were as well understood by modern scholars as Mr Arnold lays down.

On his quotation from Shakspeare, I remark, 1. "Orgulous," from French "orgueilleux," is intelligible to all who know French, and is comparable to Sicilian words in Æschylus. 2. It is contrary to fact to say, that Homer has not words, and words in great plenty, as unintelligible to later Greeks, as "orgulous" to us. 3. *Sperr*, for *Bar*, as *Splash* for *Plash*, is much less than the diversity which separates Homer from the spoken Attic. What is σμικρὸς for μικρὸς to compare with ἠβαιὸς for μικρός? 4. Mr Arnold (as I understand him) blames Shakspeare for being sometimes antiquated: I do not blame him, nor yet Homer for the same; but neither can I admit the contrast which he asserts. He says: "Shakspeare can compose, when he is at his best, in a language perfectly intelligible, in spite of the two centuries and a half which part him from us. *Homer has not Shakspeare's variations:* he is never antiquated, as

Shakspeare is sometimes." I certainly find the very same variations in Homer, as Mr Arnold finds in Shakspeare. My reader unlearned in Greek might hastily infer from the facts just laid before him, that Homer is always equally strange to a purely Attic ear: but is not so. The dialects of Greece did indeed differ strongly, as broad Scotch from English; yet as we know, Burns is sometimes perfectly intelligible to an Englishman, sometimes quite unintelligible. In spite of Homer's occasional wide receding from Attic speech, he as often comes close to it. For instance, in the first piece quoted above from Gladstone, the simile occupying five (Homeric) lines would *almost* go down in Sophocles, if the Tragedian had chosen to use the metre. There is but one out-and-out Homeric word in it (ἐπασσύτερος): and even that is used once in an Æschylean chorus. There are no strange inflections, and not a single digamma is sensibly lost. Its peculiarities are only -εϊ for ει, ἑὸν for ὅν, and δέ τε for δέ, which could not embarrass the hearer as to the sense. I myself reproduce much the same result. Thus in my translation of these five lines I have the antiquated words *blore* for *blast*, *harry* for *harass* (*harrow*, *worry*,) and the antiquated participle *hoven* from *heave*, as *cloven*, *woven* from *cleave*, *weave*. The whole has thus just a tinge of antiquity, as had the Homeric passage to the Attics, without any need of aid from a Glossary. But at other times the aid is occasionally convenient, just as in Homer or Shakspeare.

Mr Arnold plays fallaciously on the words familiar and unfamiliar. Homer's words may have been *familiar* to the Athenians (*i.e.* often heard), even when they were *not* understood, but, at most, were guessed at; or when, being understood, they were still felt and known to be utterly foreign. Of course, when thus "familiar," they could not "surprise" the Athenians, as Mr Arnold complains that my renderings surprise the English. Let mine be heard as Pope or even Cowper has been heard, and no one will be "surprised."

Antiquated words are understood well by some, ill by others, not at all by a third class; hence it is difficult to decide the limits of a glossary. Mr Arnold speaks scornfully of me (he wonders *with whom Mr Newman can have lived*), that I use the words which I use, and explain those which I explain. He censures my little Glossary, for containing three words which he did not know, and some others, which, he says, are "familiar to all the world." It is clear, he will never want a stone to throw at me. I suppose I am often guilty of keeping low company. I have found ladies whom no one would guess to be so ill-educated, who yet do not distinctly know what *lusty* means; but have an uncomfortable feeling that it is very near to *lustful;* and understand *grisly* only in the sense of *grizzled, grey.* Great numbers mistake the sense of Buxom, Imp, Dapper, deplorably. I no more wrote my Glossary than my translation for persons so highly educated as Mr Arnold.

But I must proceed to remark: Homer might have been as unintelligible to Pericles, as was the court poet of king Crœsus, and yet it might be highly improper to translate him into an old English dialect; namely, if he had been the typical poet of a logical and refined age. *Here is the real question;*—is he absolutely antique, or only antiquated relatively, as Euripides is now antiquated? A modern Greek statesman, accomplished for every purpose of modern business, might find himself quite perplexed by the infinitives, the numerous participles, the optatives, the datives, by the particle ἂν, and by the whole syntax of Euripides, as also by many special words; but this would never justify us in translating Euripides into any but a most refined style. Was Homer of this class? I say, that he *not only was* antiquated, relatively to Pericles, but *is also* absolutely antique, being the poet of a barbarian age. Antiquity in poets is not (as Horace stupidly imagines in the argument of the horse's tail) a question of years, but of intrinsic qualities. Homer sang to a wholly unfastidious audience, very susceptible to the marvellous, very unalive to the ridiculous, capable of swallowing with reverence the most grotesque conceptions. Hence nothing is easier than to turn Homer to ridicule. The fun which Lucian made of his mythology, a rhetorical critic like Mr Arnold could make of his diction, if he understood it as he understands mine. He takes credit to himself for *not* ridiculing me; and is not aware, that I could not be like Homer without being easy to ridicule. An intelligent child is the second-best reader of Homer. The best of all is a scholar of highly masculine taste; the worst of all is a fastidious and refined man, to whom everything quaint seems ignoble and contemptible.

I might have supposed that Mr Arnold thinks Homer to be a polished drawing-room poet, like Pope, when I read in him this astonishing sentence, p. 230. "Search the English language for a word which does *not* apply to Homer, and you could not fix on a better word than *quaint*." But I am taken aback at finding him praise the diction of Chapman's translation in contrast to mine. Now I never open Chapman, without being offended at his pushing Homer's quaintness most unnecessarily into the grotesque. Thus in Mr Gladstone's first passage above, where Homer says that the sea "sputters out the foam," Chapman makes it, "*all her back in bristles set, spits* every way *her* foam," obtruding what may remind one of a cat or a stoat. I hold *sputter* to be epical,[1] because it is strong; but *spit* is feeble and mean. In passing, I observe that the universal praise given to Chapman as "Homeric" (a praise which I have too absolutely repeated, perhaps through false shame of depreciating my only rival) is a testimony to me that I rightly appreciate Homeric style; for my style is Chapman's softened, purged of conceits and made far more melodious. Mr Arnold leaves me to wonder, how, with his disgust at me, he can avoid feeling tenfold disgust at Chapman; and to wonder also what he *means*, by so blankly contradicting my statement that Homer is quaint; and why he so vehemently resents it. He does not vouchsafe to me or to his readers one particle of disproof or of explanation.

I regard it as quaint in Homer to call Juno *white-arm'd goddess* and *large-ey'd*. (I have not rendered βοῶπις *ox-ey'd*, because in a case of doubt I shrank to obtrude anything so grotesque to us.) It is quaint to say, "the lord of bright-haired Juno lightens" for "it lightens"; or "my heart in my *shaggy* bosom is divided," for "I doubt": quaint to call waves *wet*, milk *white*, blood *dusky*, horses *singlehoofed*, a hero's hand *broad*, words *winged*, Vulcan *Lobfoot* (Κυλλοποδίων), a maiden *fair-ankled*, the Greeks *well-greav'd*, a spear *longshadowy*, battle and council *man-ennobling*, one's knees *dear*, and many other epithets. Mr Arnold most gratuitously asserts that the sense of these had evaporated to the Athenians. If that were true, it would not signify to this argument. Δαιμόνιος (possessed by an elf or dæmon) so lost its sense in Attic talk, that although Æschylus has it in its true meaning, some college tutors (I am told) render ὦ δαιμόνιε in Plato, "my very good sir!" This is surely no good reason for mistranslating the word in Homer. If Mr Arnold could prove (what he certainly cannot) that Sophocles had forgotten the derivation of ἐϋκνημῖδες and ἐϋμμελίης, and understood by the former nothing but "full-armed" and by the latter (as he says) nothing but "warlike," this would not justify his blame of me for rendering the words correctly. If the whole Greek nation by long familiarity had become inobservant of Homer's "oddities" (conceding this for the moment), that also would be no fault of mine. That Homer *is* extremely peculiar, even if the Greeks had become deadened to the sense of it, the proof on all sides is overpowering.

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[1] Men who can bear "belch" in poetry, nowadays pretend that "sputter" is indelicate. They find Homer's ἀποπτύει to be "elegant," but *sputter*—not! "No one would guess from Mr Newman's coarse phrases how *elegant* is Homer"!!

It is very quaint to say, "the outwork (or rampart) of the teeth" instead of "the lips." If Mr Arnold will call it "portentous" in my English, let him produce some shadow of reason for denying it to be portentous in Greek. Many phrases are so quaint as to be almost untranslatable, as μήστωρ φόβοιο (deviser of fear?) μήστωρ ἀϋτῆς (deviser of outcry?): others are quaint to the verge of being comical, as to call a man an *equipoise* (ἀτάλαντος) to a god, and to praise eyes for having a *curl* in them.[1] It is quaint to make Juno call Jupiter αἰνότατε (grimmest? direst?), whether she is in good or bad humour with him, and to call a Vision *ghastly*, when it is sent with a pleasant message. It is astonishingly quaint to tell how many oxen every fringe of Athene's ægis was worth.—It is quaint to call Patroclus "a great simpleton," for not foreseeing that he would lose his life in rushing to the rescue of his countrymen. (I cannot receive Mr Arnold's suggested Biblical correction "Thou fool!" which he thinks grander: first, because grave moral rebuke is utterly out of place; secondly, because the Greek cannot mean this;—it means infantine simplicity, and has precisely the colour of the word which I have used.)—It is quaint to say: "Patroclus kindled a great fire, *godlike man!*" or, "Automedon held up the meat, *divine* Achilles slic'd it:" quaint to address a young friend as "Oh[1] pippin!" or "Oh softheart!" or "Oh pet!" whichever is the true translation. It is quaint to compare Ajax to an ass whom boys are belabouring, Ulysses to a pet ram, Agamemnon in two lines to three gods, and in the third line to a bull; the Myrmidons to wasps, Achilles to a grampus chasing little fishes, Antilochus to a wolf which kills a dog and runs away. Menelaus striding over Patroclus's body to a heifer defending her first-born. It is quaint to say that Menelaus was as brave as a bloodsucking fly, that Agamemnon's sobs came thick as flashes of lightning; and that the Trojan mares, while running, groaned like overflowing rivers. All such similes come from a mind quick to discern similarities, but *very dull to feel incongruities;* unaware therefore that it is on a verge where the sublime easily turns into the ludicrous; a mind and heart inevitably quaint to the very core. What is it in Vulcan, when he would comfort his mother under Jupiter's threat, to make jokes about the severe mauling which he himself formerly received, and his terror lest she should be now beaten? Still more quaint (if *rollicking* is not the word), is the address by which Jupiter tries to ingratiate himself with Juno: viz. he recounts to her all his unlawful amours, declaring that in none of them was he so smitten as now. I have not enough of the γενναῖος εὐηθεία, the barbarian simple-heartedness, needed by a reader of Homer, to get through this speech with gravity. What shall I call it, certainly much worse than quaint, that the poet adds: Jupiter was more enamoured than at his *stolen* embrace in their first bed "secretly from their dear parents"? But to develop Homer's inexhaustible quaintnesses, of which Mr Arnold denies the existence, seems to me to need a long treatise. It is not to be expected, that one who is blind to superficial facts so very prominent as those which I have recounted, should retain any delicate perception of the highly coloured, intense, and very eccentric diction of Homer, even if he has ever understood it, which he forces me to doubt. He sees nothing "odd" in *κυνὸς κακομηχάνου*, or in *κυνόμυια*, "thou dogfly!" He replaces to his imagination the flesh and blood of the noble barbarian by a dim feeble spiritless outline.

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[1] In a Note to my translation (overlooked by more than one critic) I have explained *curl-ey'd*, carefully, but not very accurately perhaps; as I had not before me the picture of the Hindoo lady to which I referred. The whole *upper eyelid*, when *open*, may be called the curl; for it is shaped like a buffalo's horns. This accounts for ἑλικοβλέφαρος, "having a curly eye*lid*."

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[1] I thought I had toned it down pretty well, in rendering it "O gentle friend!" Mr Arnold rebukes me for this, without telling me what I ought to say, or what is my fault. One thing is certain, that the Greek is most *odd* and peculiar.

I have not adduced, in proof of Homer's quaintness, the monstrous simile given to us in Iliad 13, 754; viz. Hector "darted forward screaming like a snowy mountain, and flew through the Trojans and allies:" for I cannot believe that the poet wrote anything so absurd. Rather than admit this, I have suggested that the text is corrupt, and that for *ὄρεϊ νιφόεντι* we should read *ὀρνέῳ θύοντι*, "darted forth screaming *like a raging bird*." Yet, as far as I know, I am the first man that has here impugned the text. Mr Brandreth is faithful in his rendering, except that he says *shouting* for *screaming*;

> "He said; and like a snowy mountain, rush'd
> Shouting; and flew through Trojans and allies."

Chapman, Cowper, and Pope strain and twist the words to an impossible sense, putting in something about *white plume*, which they fancy suggested a snowy mountain; but they evidently accept the Greek as it stands, unhesitatingly. I claim this phenomenon in proof that to all commentators and interpreters hitherto Homer's quaintness has been such an *axiom*, that they have even acquiesced unsuspiciously in an extravagance which goes far beyond oddity. Moreover the reader may augur by my opposite treatment of the passage, with what discernment Mr Arnold condemns me of obtruding upon Homer gratuitous oddities which equal the conceits of Chapman.

But, while thus vindicating *Quaintness* as an essential quality of Homer, do I regard it as a weakness to be apologised for? Certainly not; for it is a condition of his cardinal excellences. He could not otherwise be *Picturesque* as he is. So volatile is his mind, that what would be a Metaphor in a more logical and cultivated age, with him riots in Simile which overflows its banks. His similes not merely go beyond[1] the mark of likeness; in extreme cases they even turn into contrariety. If he were not so carried away by his illustration, as to forget what he is illustrating (which belongs to a quaint mind), he would never paint for us such full and splendid pictures. Where a logical later poet would have said that Menelaus

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[1] In the noble simile of the sea-tide, quoted p. 291 above, only the two first of its five lines are to the purpose. Mr Gladstone, seduced by rhyme, has so tapered off the point of the similitude, that only a microscopic reader will see it.

> With *eagle-eye* survey'd the field,

the mere metaphor contenting him; Homer says:

> Gazing around on every side, in fashion of an eagle,
> Which, of all heaven's fowl, they say, to scan the earth is keenest:
> Whose eye, when loftiest he hangs, not the swift hare escapeth,
> Lurking amid a leaf clad bush: but straight at it he souseth,
> Unerring; and with crooked gripe doth quickly rieve its spirit.

I feel this long simile to be a disturbance of the logical balance, such as belongs to the lively eye of the savage, whose observation is intense, his concentration of reasoning powers feeble. Without this, we should never have got anything so picturesque.

Homer never sees things *in the same proportions* as we see them. To omit his digressions, and what I may call his "impertinences," in order to give to his argument that which Mr Arnold is pleased to call the proper "balance," is to value our own logical minds, more than his picturesque[1] but illogical mind.

Mr Arnold says that I am not quaint, but grotesque, in my rendering of *ϰυνὸς ϰαϰομηχάνου.* I do not hold the phrase to be quaint: to me it is excessively coarse. When Jupiter calls Juno "a bitch," of course he means a snarling cur; hence my rendering, "vixen" (or she-fox), is there perfect, since we say *vixen* of an irascible woman. But Helen had no such evil tempers, and beyond a doubt she meant to ascribe impurity to herself. I have twice committed a pious fraud by making her call herself "a vixen," where "bitch" is the only faithful rendering; and Mr Arnold, instead of thanking me for throwing a thin veil over Homer's deformity, assails me for my phrase as intolerably grotesque.

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[1] It is very singular that Mr Gladstone should imagine such a poet to have no eye for colour. I totally protest against his turning Homer's paintings into leadpencil drawings. I believe that γλαυκὸς is grey (silvergreen), χάροΨ blue; and that πρασινὸς, "leek-colour," was too mean a word for any poets, early or late, to use for "green," therefore χλωρὸς does duty for it. Κῦμα πορφύρεον is surely "the purple wave," and ἰοειδέα πόντον "the violet sea."

He further forbids me to invent new compound adjectives, as fair-thron'd, rill-bestream'd; because they strike us as new, though Homer's epithets (he says) did not so strike the Greeks: hence they derange attention from the main question. I hold this doctrine of his (conceding his fact for a moment) to be destructive of all translation whatever, into prose or poetry. When Homer tells us that Achilles' horses were munching lotus and parsley, Pope renders it by "the horses grazed," and does not say on what. Using Mr Arnold's principles, he might defend himself by arguing: "The Greeks, being familiar with such horsefood, were not struck by it as new, as my reader would be. I was afraid of telling him *what* the horses were eating, lest it should derange the balance of his mind, and injuriously divert him from the main idea of the sentence." But, I find, readers are indignant on learning Pope's suppression: they feel that he has defrauded them of a piece of interesting information. —In short, how *can* an Englishman read any Greek composition and be affected by it as Greeks were? In a piece of Euripides my imagination is caught by many things, which he never intended or calculated for the prominence which they actually get in my mind. This or that absurdity in mythology, which passed with him as matter of course, may monopolise my main attention. Our minds are not passive recipients of this or that poet's influence; but the poet is the material on which our minds actively work. If an unlearned reader thinks it very "odd" of Homer (the first time he hears it) to call Aurora "fair-thron'd," so does a boy learning Greek think it odd to call her εὔθρονος. Mr Arnold ought to blot every odd Homeric epithet out of his *Greek* Homer (or never lend the copy to a youthful learner) if he desires me to expunge "fair-thron'd" from the translation. Nay, I think he should conceal that the Morning was esteemed as a goddess, though she had no altars or sacrifice. It is *all* odd. But that is just why people want to read an English Homer,—to know all his oddities, exactly as learned men do. He is the phenomenon to be studied. His peculiarities, pleasant or unpleasant, are to be made known, precisely because of his great eminence and his substantial deeply seated worth. Mr Arnold writes like a timid biographer, fearful to let too much of his friend come out. So much as to the substance. As to mere words, here also I hold the very reverse of Mr Arnold's doctrine. I do not feel free to translate *οὐρανομήκης* by "heaven-kissing," precisely *because* Shakspeare has used the last word. It is his property, as *ἐϋκνημῖδες*, *ἐϋμμελίης*, *κυδιάνειρα*, etc., are Homer's property. I could not use it without being felt to *quote* Shakspeare, which would be highly inappropriate in a Homeric translation. But *if* nobody had ever yet used the phrase "heaven-kissing" (or if it were current without any proprietor) *then* I should be quite free to use it as a rendering of *οὐρανομήκης*. I cannot assent to a critic killing the vital powers of our tongue. If Shakspeare might invent the compound "heaven-kissing," or "man-ennobling," so might William Wordsworth or Matthew Arnold; and so might I. Inspiration is not dead, nor yet is the English language.

Mr Arnold is slow to understand what I think very obvious. Let me then put a case. What if I were to scold a missionary for rendering in Feejee the phrase "kingdom of heaven" and "Lamb of God" accurately; also "saints" and other words *characteristic of the New Testament?* I might urge against him: "This and that sounds very *odd* to the Feejees: that cannot be right, for it did *not* seem odd to the Nicene bishops. The latter had forgotten that *βασιλεία* meant 'kingdom'; they took the phrase 'kingdom of God' collectively to mean 'the Church.' The phrase did not surprise them. As to 'Lambs,' the Feejees are not accustomed to sacrifice, and cannot be expected to know of themselves what 'Lamb of God' means, as Hebrews did. The courtiers of Constantine thought it very natural to be called *ἅγιοι*, for they were accustomed to think every baptised person *ἅγιος*; but to the baptised courtiers of Feejee it really seems very *odd* to be called *saints*. You disturb the balance of their judgment."

The missionary might reply: "You seemed to be ashamed of the oddities of the Gospel. I am not. They grow out of its excellences and cannot be separated. By avoiding a few eccentric phrases you will do little to remove the deep-seated eccentricity of its very essence. Odd and eccentric it will remain, unless you despoil it of its heart, and reduce it to a fashionable philosophy." And just so do I reply to Mr Arnold. The Homeric style (whether it be that of an individual or of an age) is peculiar, is "odd," if Mr Arnold like the word, to the very core. Its eccentricities in epithet are mere efflorescences of its essential eccentricity. If Homer could cry out to us, I doubt not he would say, as Oliver Cromwell to the painter, "Paint me just as I am, *wart and all:*" but if the true Homer could reappear, I am sure Mr Arnold would start from him just as a bishop of Rome from a fisherman apostle. If a translator of the Bible honours the book by his close rendering of its characteristics, however "odd," so do I honour Homer by the same. Those characteristics, the moment I produce them, Mr Arnold calls *ignoble.* Well: be it so; but I am not to blame for them. They exist whether Mr Arnold likes them or not.

I will here observe that he bids me paraphrase τανύπεπλος (trailing-robed) into something like, "Let gorgeous Tragedy With sceptred pall come sweeping by." I deliberately judge, that to paraphrase an otiose epithet is the very worst thing that can be done: to omit it entirely would be better. I object even to Mr Gladstone's

> . . . whom Leto bare,
> Leto with the flowing hair.

For the repetition overdoes the prominence of the epithet. Still more extravagant is Mr Arnold in wishing me to turn "single-hoofed horses" in to "something which *as little surprises us* as 'Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds'": p. 266. To reproduce Shakspeare would be in any case a "surprising" mode of translating Homer: but the principle which changes "single-hoofed" into a different epithet which the translator thinks *better*, is precisely that which for more than two centuries has made nearly all English translation worthless. To throw the poet into your crucible, and bring out old Pelias young, is not a hopeful process. I had thought, the manly taste of this day had outgrown the idea that a translator's business is to melt up the old coin and stamp it with a modern image. I am wondering that I should have to write against such notions: I would not take the trouble, only that they come against me from an Oxford Professor of Poetry.

At the same time, his doctrine, as I have said, goes far beyond compound epithets. Whether I say "motleyhelmèd Hector" or "Hector of the motley helm," "silver-footed Thetis" or "Thetis of the silver foot," "man-ennobling combat" or "combat which ennobles man," the novelty is so nearly on a par, that he cannot condemn one and justify the other on this score. Even Pope falls far short of the false taste which would plane down every Homeric prominence: for he prizes an elegant epithet like "silver-footed," however new and odd.

From such a Homer as Mr Arnold's specimens and principles would give us, no one could *learn* anything; no one could have any motive for reading the translation. He smooths down the stamp of Homer's coin, till nothing is left even for miscroscopic examination. When he forbids me (p. 266) to let my reader know that Homer calls horses "single hoofed," of course he would suppress also the epithets "white milk," "dusky blood," "dear knees," "dear life," etc. His process obliterates everything characteristic, great or small.

Mr Arnold condemns my translating certain names of horses. He says (p. 244): "Mr Newman calls Xanthus *Chesnut;* as he calls Balius *Spotted* and Podarga *Spryfoot:* which is as if a Frenchman were to call Miss Nightingale *Mdlle. Rossignol*, or Mr Bright *M. Clair.*" He is very wanting in discrimination. If I had translated Hector into *Possessor* or Agamemnon into *Highmind*, his censure would be just. A Miss White may be a brunette, a Miss Brown may be a blonde: we utter the proper names of men and women without any remembrance of their intrinsic meaning. But it is different with many names of domestic animals. We never call a dog *Spot*, unless he is spotted; nor without consciousness that the name expresses his peculiarity. No one would give to a black horse the name Chesnut; nor, if he had called a chesnut horse by the name Chesnut, would he ever forget the meaning of the name while he used it. The Greeks called a chesnut horse *xanthos* and a spotted horse *balios;* therefore, until Mr Arnold proves the contrary, I believe that they never read the names of Achilles' two horses without a sense of their meaning. Hence the names ought to be translated; while Hector and Laomedon ought not. The same reasoning applies to Podarga, though I do not certainly understand ἀργός. I have taken it to mean *sprightly*.

Mr Arnold further asserts, that Homer is never "garrulous." Allowing that too many others agree with me, he attributes our error to giving too much weight to a sentence in Horace! I admire Horace as an ode-writer, but I do not revere him as a critic, any more than as a moral philosopher. I say that Homer is garrulous, because I see and feel it. Mr Arnold puts me into a most unwelcome position. I have a right to say, I have some enthusiasm for Homer. In the midst of numerous urgent calls of duty and taste, I devoted every possible quarter of an hour for two years and a half to translate the Iliad, toiling unremittingly in my vacations and in my walks, and going to large expenses of money, in order to put the book before the unlearned; and this, though I am not a Professor of Poetry nor even of Greek. Yet now I am forced to appear as Homer's disparager and accuser! But if Homer were always a poet, he could not be, what he is, so many other things beside poet. As the Egyptians paint in their tombs processes of art, not because they are beautiful or grand, but from a mere love of imitating; so Homer narrates perpetually from a mere love of chatting. In how thoroughly Egyptian a way does he tell the process of cutting up an ox and making *kebâb;* the process of bringing a boat to anchor and carefully putting by the tackle; the process of taking out a shawl from a chest, where it lies at the very bottom! With what glee he repeats the secret talk of the gods; and can tell all about the toilet of Juno. Every particular of trifling actions comes out with him, as, the opening of a door or box with a key. He tells who made Juno's earrings or veil or the shield of Ajax, the history of Agamemnon's breastplate, and in what detail a hero puts on his pieces of armour. I would not press the chattiness of Pandarus, Glaucus, Nestor, Æneas, in the midst of battle; I might press his description of wounds. Indeed I have said enough, and more than enough, against Mr Arnold's novel, unsupported, paradoxical assertion.—But this is connected with another subject. I called Homer's manner "direct": Mr Arnold (if I understand) would supersede this by his own epithet "rapid." But I cannot admit the exchange: Homer is often the opposite of rapid. Amplification is his characteristic, as it must be of every improvisatore, every popular orator: condensation indeed is improper for anything but written style; written to be read privately. But I regard as Homer's worst defect, his lingering over scenes of endless carnage and painful wounds. He knows to half an inch where one hero hits another and how deep. They arm: they approach: they encounter: we have to listen to stereotype details again and again. Such a style is anything but "rapid." Homer's garrulity often leads him into it; yet he can do far better, as in a part of the fight over Patroclus's body, and other splendid passages.

Garrulity often vents itself in expletives. Mr Arnold selects for animadversion this line of mine (p. 235),

> "A thousand fires along the plain, *I say*, that night were gleaming."

He says: "This may be the genuine style of ballad poetry, but it is *not* the style of Homer." I reply; my use o expletives is moderate indeed compared to Homer's. Mr Arnold writes, as if quite unaware that such words as the intensely prosaic ἄρα, and its abbreviations ἂρ, ῥα, with τοι, τε, δὴ, μάλα, ἦ, ἦ ῥα νυ, περ, overflow in epic style; and that a pupil who has mastered the very copious stock o Attic particles, is taken quite aback by the extravagant number in Homer. Our expletives are generally more offensive, because longer. My principle is, to admit only such expletives as *add energy*, and savour of antiquity. T the feeble expletives of mean ditties I am not prone. I once heard from an eminent counsellor the first lesson o young lawyers, in the following doggerel:

> He who holds his lands in fee,
> Need neither quake nor quiver:
> For I humbly conceive, look ye, do ye see?
> He holds his lands for ever.

The "humbly conceiving" certainly outdoes Homer. Ye if the poet had chosen (as he *might* have chosen) to mak Polydamas or Glaucus say:

> Ὅστις ἐπετράφθη τέμενος πίστει βασιλῆος,
> φημί τοι, οὗτος ἀνὴρ οὔτ᾽ ἂρ τρέμει οὔτε φοβεῖται·
> δὴ μάλα γάρ ῥα ἑὰς κρατέοι κεν ἐσαιὲν ἀρούρας:

I rather think the following would be a fair prose rendering "Whoso hath been entrusted with a demesne under pledg with the king (I tell you); this man neither trembleth (yo see) nor feareth: for (look ye!) he (verily) may hold (you see) his lands for ever."

Since Mr Arnold momentarily appeals to me on the chasm between Attic and Homeric Greek, I turn the last piece into a style *far less* widely separated from modern English than Homer from Thucydides.

> Dat mon, quhich hauldeth Kyngis-af
> Londis yn féo, niver
> (I tell 'e) feereth aught; sith hee
> Doth hauld hys londis yver.

I certainly do *not* recommend this style to a translator, yet it would have its advantage. Even with a smaller change of dialect it would aid us over Helen's self-piercing denunciation, "approaching to Christian penitence," as some have judged it.

> Quoth she, I am a gramsome bitch,
> If woman bitch may bee.

But in behalf of the poet I must avow: when one considers how dramatic he is, it is marvellous how little in him can offend. For this very reason he is above needing tender treatment from a translator, but can bear faithful rendering, not only better than Shakspeare but better than Pindar or Sophocles.

When Mr Arnold denies that Homer is ever prosaic or homely, his own specimens of translation put me into despair of convincing him; for they seem to me a very anthology of prosaic flatness. Phrases, which are not in themselves bad, if they were elevated by something in the syntax or rhythm distinguishing them from prose, become in him prose out-and-out. "To Peleus why did we give you, to a mortal?" "In the plain *there* were kindled a thousand fires; by each one *there* sate fifty men." [At least he might have left out the expletive.] "By their chariots stood the steeds, and champed the white barley; while their masters sate by the fire and waited for morning." "Us, whose portion for ever Zeus has made it, from youth *right up* to age, to be winding skeins of grievous wars, till *every soul of us* perish." The words which I here italicise, seem to me below noble ballad. What shall I say of "I bethink me what the Trojan men and Trojan women might murmur." "Sacred Troy shall *go to destruction.*" "Or bear pails to the well of Messeïs." "See, the wife of Hector, that great pre-eminent captain of the horsemen of Troy, *in the day they fought* for their city," for, "*who was* captain in the day *on which*——." "Let me be dead and the earth be mounded (?) above me, ere I hear thy cries, and thy captivity[1] *told of*." "By no slow pace or want of swiftness *of ours*[2] did the Trojans *obtain to strip* the arms of Patroclus." "Here I am destined to perish, far from my father and mother dear; *for all that*, I will not," etc. "Dare they not enter the fight, or stand in the council of heroes, *all* for fear of the shame and the *taunts my crime* has awakened?" One who regards all this to be high poetry,—emphatically "noble,"—may well think τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος or "with him there came forty black galleys," or the broiling of the beef collops, to be such. When Mr Arnold regards "no want of swiftness *of ours;*" "for all that," in the sense of nevertheless; "*all* for fear," *i.e.* because of the fear; *not* to be prosaic: my readers, however ignorant of Greek, will dispense with further argument from me. Mr Arnold's inability to discern prose in Greek is not to be trusted.

But I see something more in this phenomenon. Mr Arnold is an original poet; and, as such, certainly uses a diction far more elevated than he here puts forward to represent Homer. He calls his Homeric diction *plain* and *simple*. Interpreting these words from the contrast of Mr Arnold's own poems, I claim his suffrage as on my side that Homer is often in a style much lower than what the moderns esteem to be poetical. But I protest, that he carries it *very much* too far, and levels the noblest down to the most negligent style of Homer. The poet is *not* always so "ignoble," as the unlearned might infer from my critic's specimens. He never drops so low as Shakspeare; yet if he were as sustained as Virgil or Milton, he would with it lose his vast superiority over these, his rich variety. That the whole first book of the Iliad is pitched lower than the rest, though it has vigorous descriptions, is denoted by the total absence of simile in it: for Homer's kindling is always indicated by simile. The second book rises on the first, until the catalogue of ships, which (as if to atone for its flatness) is ushered in by five consecutive similes. In the third and fourth books the poet continues to rise, and almost culminates in the fifth; but then seems to restrain himself, lest nothing grander be left for Achilles. Although I do not believe in a unity of authorship between the Odyssey and the Iliad, yet in the Iliad itself I see such unity, that I cannot doubt its negligences to be from art. (The monstrous speech of Nestor in the 11th book is a case by itself. About 100 lines have perhaps been added later, for reasons other than literary.) I observe that just before the poet is about to bring out Achilles in his utmost splendour, he has three-quarters of a book comparatively tame, with a ridiculous legend told by Agamemnon in order to cast his own sins upon Fate. If Shakspeare introduces coarse wrangling, buffoonery, or mean superstition, no one claims or wishes this to be in a high diction or tragic rhythm; and why should anyone wish such a thing from Homer or Homer's translator? I find nothing here in the poet to apologise for; but much cause for indignation, when the unlearned public is misled by translators or by critics to expect delicacy and elegance out of place. But I beg the unlearned to judge for himself whether Homer *can* have intended such lines as the following for poetry, and whether I am bound to make them any better than I do.

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[1] He pares down ἑλκηθμοῖο (the dragging away of a woman by the hair) into "captivity"! Better surely is my "ignoble" version: "Ere-that I see thee *dragg'd away*, and hear thy shriek of anguish."

[2] He means *ours* for two syllables. "Swiftness of ours" is surely ungrammatical. "A galley of my own"=one of my own galleys; but "a father of mine," is absurd, since each has but one father. I confess I have myself been seduced into writing "those two eyes of his," to avoid "*those his* two eyes": but I have since condemned and altered it.

> Then visiting he urged each man with words,
> Mesthles and Glaucus and Medon and Thersilochus
> And Asteropæus and Deisenor and Hippothoüs
> And Phorkys and Chromius and Ennomus the augur.

He has lines in plenty as little elevated. If they came often in masses, it would be best to translate them into avowed prose: but since gleams of poetry break out amid what is flattest, I have no choice but to imitate Homer in retaining a uniform, but easy and unpretending metre. Mr Arnold calls my metre "slipshod": if it can rise into grandeur when needful, the epithet is a praise.

Of course I hold the Iliad to be *generally* noble and grand. Very many of the poet's conceptions were grand to him, mean to us: especially is he mean and absurd in scenes of conflict between the gods. Besides, he is disgusting and horrible occasionally in word and thought; as when Hecuba wishes to "cling on Achilles and eat up his liver"; when (as Jupiter says) Juno would gladly eat Priam's children raw; when Jupiter hanged Juno up and fastened pair of anvils to her feet; also in the description of dreadful wounds, and the treatment which (Priam says) dogs give to an old man's corpse. The descriptions of Vulcan and Thersites are ignoble; so is the mode of mourning for Hector adopted by Priam; so is the treatment of the populace by Ulysses, which does but reflect the manners of the day. I am not now blaming Homer for these things; but I say no treatment can elevate the subject; the translator must not be expected to make noble what is not so intrinsically.

If anyone think that I am disparaging Homer, let me remind him of the horrid grossnesses of Shakspeare, which yet are not allowed to lessen our admiration of Shakspeare's grandeur. The Homer of the Iliad is morally pure and often very tender; but to expect refinement and universal delicacy of expression in that stage of civilisation is quite anachronistic and unreasonable. As in earlier England, so in Homeric Greece, even high poetry partook of the coarseness of society. This was probably inevitable, precisely because Greek epic poetry was so *natural.*

Mr Arnold says that I make Homer's nobleness *eminently ignoble.* This suggests to me to quote a passage not because I think myself particularly successful in it, but because the poet is evidently aiming to be grand, when his mightiest hero puts forth mighty boastings, offensive to some of the gods. It is the speech of Achilles over the dead body of Asteropæus (Iliad 21, 184). Whether I make it ignoble, by my diction or my metre, the reader must judge.

Lie as thou art. 'Tis hard for thee to strive against the children
Of overmatching Saturn's son, tho' offspring of a River.
Thou boastest, that thy origin is from a Stream broad-flówing;
I boast, from mighty Jupiter to trace my first beginning.
A man who o'er the Myrmidons holdeth wide rule, begat me,
Peleus; whose father Æacus by Jupiter was gotten.
Rivers, that trickle to the sea, than Jupiter are weaker;

So, than the progeny of Jove, weaker a River's offspring.
Yea, if he aught avail'd to help, behold! a mighty River
Beside thee here: but none can fight with Jove, the child of Saturn.
Not royal Acheloïus with him may play the equal.
Nor e'en the amplebosom'd strength of deeply-flowing Ocean:
Tho' from his fulness every Sea and every River welleth,
And all the ever-bubbling springs and eke their vasty sources.
Yet at the lightning-bolt of Jove doth even Ocean shudder,
And at the direful thunder-clap, when from the sky it crasheth.

Mr Arnold has in some respects attacked me discreetly; I mean, where he has said that which damages me with his readers, and yet leaves me no possible reply. What is easier than for one to call another ignoble? what more damaging? what harder to refute? Then when he speaks of my "metrical exploits" how can I be offended? to what have I to reply? His words are expressive either of compliment or of contempt; but in either case are intangible. Again: when he would show how tender he has been of my honour, and how unwilling to expose my enormities, he says: p. 243: "I will by no means search in Mr Newman's version for passages likely to raise a laugh: that search, *alas!* would be far too easy;" I find the pity which the word *alas!* expresses, to be very clever, and very effective against me. But, I think, he was not discreet, but very unwise, in making dogmatic statements on the ground of erudition, many of which I have exposed; and about which much more remains to be said than space will allow me.

In his denial that Homer is "garrulous," he complains that so many think him to be "diffuse." Mr Arnold, it seems, is unaware of that very prominent peculiarity; which suits ill even to Mr Gladstone's style. Thus, where Homer said (and I said) in a passage quoted above, "people that have *a voice in their bosom*," Mr Gladstone has only "*speaking* men." I have noticed the epithet *shaggy* as quaint, in "His heart in his shaggy bosom was divided," where, in a moral thought, a physical epithet is obtruded. But even if "shaggy" be dropped, it remains diffuse (and characteristically so) to say "my *heart in my bosom* is divided," for "I doubt." So—"I will speak what *my heart in my bosom* bids me." So, Homer makes men think κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμὸν, "in their heart *and mind;*" and deprives them of "mind and soul." Also: "this appeared to him *in his mind* to be the best counsel." Mr Arnold assumes tones of great superiority; but every school-boy knows that diffuseness is a distinguishing characteristic of Homer. Again, the poet's epithets are often selected by their convenience for his metre; sometimes perhaps even appropriated for no other cause. No one has ever given any better reason why Diomedes and Menelaus are almost exclusively called βοὴν ἀλαθὸς, except that it suits the metre. This belongs to the improvisatore, the negligent, the ballad style. The word ἐϋμμελίης, which I with others render "ashen-speared," is said of Priam, of Panthus, and of sons of Panthus. Mr Arnold rebukes me, p. 272 for violating my own principles. "I say, on the other hand, that εὐωμελίω has *not* the effect[1] of a peculiarity in the original, while 'ashen-speared' *has* the effect of a peculiarity in the English: and 'warlike' is as marking an equivalent as I dare give for ἐϋμμελίω, *for fear of disturbing the balance of expression* in Homer's sentence." Mr Arnold cannot write a sentence on Greek, without showing an ignorance hard to excuse in one who thus comes forward as a vituperating censor. *Warlike* is a word current in the lips and books of all Englishmen: ἐϋμμελίης, is a word *never* used, never, I believe, in all Greek literature, by anyone but Homer. If he does but turn to Liddell and Scott, he will see their statement, that the Attic form εὐμελίας is only to be found in grammars. He is here, as always, wrong in his facts. The word is most singular in Greek; more singular by far than "ashen-spear'd" in English, because it is more obscure, as is its special application to one or two persons: and in truth I have doubted whether we any better understand Eumelian Priam than Gerenian Nestor.—Mr Arnold presently imputes to me the opinion that χιτὼν means "a cloak," *which he does not dispute*; but if I had thought it necessary to be literal, I must have rendered χαλκο-χίτωνες brazen-shirted. He suggests to me the rendering "brazen-coated," which I have used in II. 4, 285 and elsewhere. I have also used "brazen-clad," and I now prefer "brazen-mail'd." I here wish only to press that Mr Arnold's criticism proceeds on a false fact. Homer's epithet was *not* a familiar word at

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[1] Of course no peculiarity of phrase has *the effect* of peculiarity on a man who has imperfect acquaintance with the delicacies of a language; who, for instance, thinks that ἐλκηθμὸς means δουλεία.

Athens (in any other sense than as Burns or Virgil may be familiar to Mr Arnold), but was strange, unknown even to their poets; hence his demand that I shall use a word already familiar in English poetry is doubly baseless. The later poets of Greece have plenty of words beginning with χαλκο-; but this one word is exclusively Homer's.—Everything that I have now said, may be repeated still more pointedly concerning ἐϋκνημῖδες, inasmuch as directing attention to leg-armour is peculiarly quaint. No one in all Greek literature (as far as I know) names the word but Homer; and yet Mr Arnold turns on me with his ever reiterated, ever unsupported, assertions and censures, of course assuming that "the scholar" is with him. (I have no theory at hand, to explain why he regards his own word to suffice without attempt at proof.) The epithet is intensely peculiar; and I observe that Mr Arnold has not dared to suggest a translation. It is clear to me that he is ashamed of my poet's oddities; and has no mode of escaping from them but by bluntly denying facts. Equally peculiar to Homer are the words κυδιάνειρὰ, τανύπεπλος and twenty others, equally unknown to Attic the peculiar compound μελιήδης (adopted from Homer by Pindar), about all which he carps at me on false grounds. But I pass these, and speak a little more at length about μέροπες.

Will the reader allow me to vary these tedious details, by imagining a conversation between the Aristophanic Socrates and his clownish pupil Strepsiades. I suppose the philosopher to be instructing him in the higher Greek, Homer being the text.

Soc. Now Streppy, tell me what μέροπες ἄνθρωποι means?

Strep. Let me see: μέροπες? that must mean "half-faced."

Soc. Nonsense, silly fellow: think again.

Strep. Well then: μέροπες, half-eyed, squinting.

Soc. No; you are playing the fool: it is not our ὀπ in ὄψις, ὄψομαι, κάτοπτρον, but another sort of ὀπ.

Strep. Why, you yesterday told me that οἴνοπα was "wine-faced," and αἴθοπὰ "blazing-faced," something like our αἰθίοψ.

Soc. Ah! well: it is not so wonderful that you go wrong. It is true, there is also νῶροψ, στέροψ, ἦνοψ. Those might mislead you: μέροψ is rather peculiar. Now cannot you think of any characteristic of mankind, which μέροπες will express. How do men differ from other animals?

Strep. I have it! I heard it from your young friend Euclid. Μέροψ ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, "man is a cooking animal."

Soc. You stupid lout! what are you at? what do you mean?

Strep. Why, μέροψ, from μεῖρω, I distribute, ὄψον sauce.

Soc. No, no: ὄψον has the ὀψ, with radical immovable ς in it; but here ὀπ is the root, and ς is movable.

Strep. Now I have got it; μείρω, I distribute, ὀπὸν, juice, rennet.

Soc. Wretched man! you must forget your larder and your dairy, if ever you are to learn grammar.—Come Streppy: leave rustic words, and think of the language o the gods. Did you ever hear of the brilliant goddess Circe and of her ὄπα καλὴν?

Strep. Oh yes; Circe and her beautiful face.

Soc. I told you, *no!* you forgetful fellow. It is ANOTHER ὀπ. Now I will ask you in a different way. Do you know why we call fishes ἔλλοπες?

Strep. I suppose, because they are cased in scales.

Soc. That is not it. (And yet I am not sure. Perhaps the fellow is right, after all.) Well, we will not speak any more of ἐλλὸπες. But did you never hear in Euripides, οὐ ἔχω γεγωνεῖν ὄπα? What does that mean?

Strep. "I am not able to shout out, ὦ πόποι."

Soc. No, no, Streppy: but Euripides often uses ὄπα He takes it from Homer, and it is akin to ἐπ, not to ou ὀπ and much less to πόποι. What does ἔπη mean?

Strep. It means such lines as the diviners sing.

Soc. So it does in Attic, but Homer uses it for ῥήματα words; indeed we also sometimes.

Strep. Yes, yes, I do know it. All is right.

Soc. I think you do: well, and ὄψ means *a voice*, φωνὴ.

Strep. How you learned men like to puzzle us! I ofte have heard ὀπι, ὄπα in the Tragedies, but never quit understood it. What a pity they do not say φωνὴ whe they mean φωνή.

Soc. We have at last made one step. Now what is μέροψ μέροπες ἄνθρωποι.

Strep. Μείρω, I divide, ὄπα, φωνὴν, voice; "voice-divid ing": what *can* that mean?

Soc. You have heard a wild dog howl, and a tame dog bark: tell me how they differ.

Strep. The wild dog gives a long long *oo-oo*, which changes like a trumpet if you push your hand up and down it; and the tame dog says *bow*, *wow*, *wow*, like two or three panpipes blown one after another.

Soc. Exactly; you see the tame dog is humanised: he *divides his voice* into syllables, as men do. "Voice-dividing" means "speaking in syllables."

Strep. Oh, how clever you are!

Soc. Well then, you understand; "Voice-dividing" means *articulating*.

Mr Arnold will see in the Scholiast on Iliad 1, 250, precisely this order of analysis for μέροπες. It seems to me to give not a traditional but a grammatical explanation. Be that as it may, it indicates that a Greek had to pass through *exactly the same process* in order to expound μέροπες, as an Englishman to get sense out of "voice-dividing." The word is twice used by Æschylus, who affects Homeric words, and one by Euripides (Iph. T.) in the connection πολέσιν μερόπων, where the very unusual Ionism πολέσιν shows in how Homeric a region is the poet's fancy. No other word ending in οψ except μέροψ can be confidently assigned to the root ὄψ, a voice. Ἤνοψ in Homer (itself of most uncertain sense and derivation) is generally referred to the other ὄψ. The sense of ἔλλοψ again[1] is very uncertain. Every way therefore μέροψ is "odd" and obscure. The phrase "articulating" is utterly prosaic and inadmissible. *Vocal* is rather too Latinised for my style, and besides, is apt to mean *melodious*. The phrase "voice-dividing" is indeed easier to us than μέροπες can have been to the Athenians, because we all know what *voice* means, but they had to be taught scholastically what ὄπα meant; nor would easily guess that ὄψ in μέροψ had a sense, differing from ὄψ in (ἀ)στέροψ οἶνοψ, αἶθοψ, αἰθίοψ, νῶροψ (ἤνοψ), χάροψ. Finally, since μέροπες is only found in the plural, it remains an open question, whether it does not mean "speaking various languages." Mr Arnold will find that Stephanus and Scapula treat it as doubtful, though Liddell and Scott do not name the second interpretation.

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[1] Ἐλλὸς needs light and gives none. Benfey suggests that it is for ἐνεὸς, as ἄλλος, *alius*, for Sanscrit *anya*. He with me refers ἔλλοψ to λέπω. Cf. *squamigeri* in Lucretius.

I desired to leave in the English all the uncertainty of the Greek: but my critic is unencumbered with such cares.

Hitherto I have been unwillingly thrown into nothing but antagonism to Mr Arnold, who thereby at least adds tenfold value to his praise, and makes me proud when he declares that the *structure* of my sentences is good and Homeric. For this I give the credit to my metre, which alone confers on me this cardinal advantage. But in turn I will compliment Mr Arnold at the expense of some other critics. He does know, and they do not, the difference of *flowing* and *smooth*. A mountain torrent is flowing, but often very rough; such is Homer. The "staircases of Neptune" on the canal of Languedoc are smooth, but do not flow: you have to descend abruptly from each level to the next. It would be unjust to say absolutely, that such is Pope's smoothness; yet often, I feel, this censure would not be too severe. The rhyme forces him to so frequent a change of the nominative, that he becomes painfully discontinuous, where Homer is what Aristotle calls "long-linked." At the same time, in our language, in order to impart a flowing style, good structure does not suffice. A principle is needed, unknown to the Greeks; viz. the natural divisions of the sentence oratorically, must coincide with the divisions of the verse musically. To attain this *always* in a long poem, is very difficult to a translator who is scrupulous as to tampering with the sense. I have not always been successful in this. But before any critic passes on me the general sentence that I am "deficient in flow," let him count up the proportion of instances in which he can justly make the complaint, and mark whether they occur in elevated passages.

I shall now speak of the peculiarities of my diction, under three heads: 1. old or antiquated words; 2. coarse words expressive of outward actions, but having no moral colour; 3. words of which the sense has degenerated in modern days.

1. Mr Arnold appears to regard what is *antiquated* as *ignoble*. I think him, as usual, in fundamental error. In general the nobler words come from ancient style, and in no case can it be said that old words (as such) are ignoble. To introduce such terms as *whereat*, *therefrom*, *quoth*, *beholden*, *steed*, *erst*, *anon*, *anent*, into the midst of style which in all other respects is modern and prosaic, would be like to that which we often hear from half-educated people. The

want of harmony makes us regard it as low-minded and uncouth. From this cause (as I suspect) has stolen into Mr Arnold's mind the fallacy, that the words themselves are uncouth.[1] But the words are excellent, if only they are in proper keeping with the general style.—Now it is very possible, that in some passages, few or many, I am open to the charge of having mixed old and new style unskilfully; but I cannot admit that the old words (as such) are ignoble. No one speaks of Spenser's dialect, nay, nor of Thomson's; although with Thomson it was assumed, exactly as by me, but to a far greater extent, and without any such necessity as urges me. As I have stated in my preface, a broad tinge of antiquity in the style is essential, to make Homer's barbaric puerilities and eccentricities less offensive. (Even Mr Arnold would admit this, if he admitted my *facts:* but he denies that there is anything eccentric, antique, quaint, barbaric in Homer: that is his *only* way of resisting my conclusion.) If Mr Gladstone were able to give his valuable time to work out an entire Iliad in his refined modern style, I feel confident that he would find it impossible to deal faithfully with the eccentric phraseology and with the negligent parts of the poem. I have the testimony of an unfriendly reviewer, that I am the first and *only* translator that has dared to give Homer's constant epithets and not conceal his forms of thought: of course I could not have done this in modern style. The lisping of a child is well enough from a child, but is disgusting in a full-grown man. Cowper and Pope systematically cut out from Homer whatever they cannot make *stately*, and harmonise with modern style: even Mr Brandreth often shrinks, though he is brave enough to say *ox-eyed Juno.* Who then can doubt the extreme unfitness of their metre and of their modern diction?

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[1] I do not see that Mr Arnold has any right to reproach *me*, because *he* does not know Spenser's word "bragly" (which I may have used twice in the Iliad), or Dryden's word "plump," for a mass. The former is so near in sound to *brag* and *braw*, that an Englishman who is once told that it means "proudly fine," ought thenceforward to find it very intelligible: the latter is a noble modification of the vulgar *lump.* That he can carp as he does against these words and against *bulkin* (=young bullock) as unintelligible, is a testimony how little I have imposed of difficulty on my readers. Those who know *lambkin* cannot find *bulkin* very hard. Since writing the above, I see a learned writer in the Philological Museum illustrates ἴλη by the old English phrase "a plump of spears."

My opposers never fairly meet the argument. Mr Arnold, when most gratuitously censuring my mild rendering of κυνὸς κακομηχάνου ὀκρυοέσσης, *does not dare to suggest any English for it himself.* Even Mr Brandreth skips it. It is not merely offensive words; but the purest and simplest phrases, as a man's "dear life," "dear knees," or his "tightly-built house," are a stumbling-block to translators. No stronger proof is necessary, or perhaps is possible, than these phenomena give, that to shed an antique hue over Homer is of first necessity to a translator: without it, *injustice* is done both to the reader and to the poet. Whether I have managed the style well, is a separate question, and is matter of detail. I may have sometimes done well, sometimes ill; but I claim that my critics shall judge me from a broader ground, and shall not pertinaciously go on comparing my version with modern style, and condemning me as (what they are pleased to call) *inelegant* because it is not like refined modern poetry, when it specially avoids to be such. They never deal thus with Thomson or Chatterton, any more than with Shakspeare or Spenser.

There is no sharp distinction possible between the foreign and the antiquated in language. What is obsolete with us, may still live somewhere: as, what in Greek is called Poetic or Homeric, may at the same time be living Æolic. So, whether I take a word from Spenser or from Scotland, is generally unimportant. I do not remember more than four Scotch words, which I have occasionally adopted for convenience; viz. Callant, young man; Canny, right-minded; Bonny, handsome; to Skirl, to cry shrilly. A trochaic word, which I cannot get in English, is sometimes urgently needed. It is astonishing to me that those who ought to know both what a large mass of antique and foreign-sounding words an Athenian found in Homer, and how many Doric or Sicilian forms as well as Homeric words the Greek tragedians *on principle* brought into their songs, should make the outcry that they do against my very limited use of that which has an antique or Scotch sound. Classical scholars ought to set their faces against the double heresy, of trying to enforce, that foreign poetry, however various, shall be all rendered into one English dialect, and that this shall, in order of words and in diction, closely approximate to polished prose. From an Oxford Professor I should have expected the very opposite spirit to that which Mr Arnold shows. He ought to know and feel that one glory of Greek poetry is its great internal variety. He admits the principle that old words are a source of ennoblement for diction, when he extols the Bible as his standard: for surely he claims no rhetorical inspiration for the translators. Words which have come to us in a sacred connection, no doubt, gain a sacred hue, but they must not be allowed to desecrate other old and excellent words. Mr Arnold informs his Oxford hearers that "his Bibliolatry is perhaps excessive." So the public will judge, if he say that *wench*, *whore*, *pate*, *pot*, *gin*, *damn*, *busybody*, *audience*, *principality*, *generation*, are epical noble words because they are in the Bible, and that *lief*, *ken*, *in sooth*, *grim*, *stalwart*, *gait*, *guise*, *eld*, *hie*, *erst*, are bad, because they are not there. Nine times out of ten, what are called "poetical" words, are nothing but antique words, and are made ignoble by Mr Arnold's doctrine. His very arbitrary condemnation of *eld*, *lief*, *in sooth*, *gait*, *gentle friend* in one passage of mine as "bad words," is probably due to his monomaniac fancy that there is nothing quaint and nothing antique in Homer. Excellent and noble as are these words which he rebukes, excellent even for Æschylus, I should doubt the propriety of using them in the dialogue of Euripides; on the level of which he seems to think Homer to be.

2. Our language, especially the Saxon part of it, abounds with vigorous monosyllabic verbs, and dissyllabic frequentatives derived from them, indicative of strong physical action. For these words (which, I make no doubt, Mr Arnold regards as ignoble plebeians), I claim Quiritarian rights: but I do not wish them to displace patricians from high service. Such verbs as *sweat*, *haul*, *plump*, *maul*, *yell*, *bang*, *splash*, *smash*, *thump*, *tug*, *scud*, *sprawl*, *spank*, etc., I hold (in their purely physical sense) to be eminently epical: for the epic revels in descriptions of violent action to which they are suited. Intense muscular exertion in every form, intense physical action of the surrounding elements, with intense ascription or description of size or colour;—together make up an immense fraction of the poem. To cut out these words is to emasculate the epic. Even Pope admits such words. My eye in turning his pages was just

now caught by: "They tug, they sweat." Who will say that "tug," "sweat" are admissible, but "bang," "smash," "sputter" are inadmissible? Mr Arnold resents my saying that Homer is often homely. He is homely expressly because he is natural. The epical diction admits both the gigantesque and the homely: it inexorably refuses the conventional, under which is comprised a vast mass of what some wrongly call elegant. But while I justify the use of homely words in a primary physical, I depreciate them in a secondary moral sense. Mr Arnold clearly is dull to this distinction, or he would not utter against me the following taunt, p. 263:

"*To grunt and sweat under a weary load* does perfectly well where it comes in Shakspeare: but if the translator of Homer, who will hardly have wound up our minds to the pitch at which these words of Hamlet find them, were to employ, when he has to speak of Homer's heroes under the load of calamity, this figure of 'grunting' and 'sweating,' we should say, *He Newmanises.*"

Mr Arnold here not only makes a mistake, he propagates a slander; as if I had ever used such words as *grunt* and *sweat* morally. If Homer in the Iliad spoke of grunting swine, as he does of sweating steeds, so should I. As the coarse metaphors here quoted from Shakspeare are utterly opposed to Homer's style, to obtrude them on him would be a gross offence. Mr Arnold sends his readers away with the belief that this is my practice, though he has not dared to assert it. I *bear* such coarseness in Shakspeare, not because I am "wound up to a high pitch" by him, "borne away by a mighty current" (which Mr Arnold, with ingenious unfairness to me, assumes to be certain in a reader of Shakspeare and all but impossible in a reader of Homer), but because I know, that in Shakspeare's time all literature was coarse, as was the speech of courtiers and of the queen herself. Mr Arnold imputes to me Shakspeare's coarseness, from which I instinctively shrink; and when his logic leads to the conclusion, "he Shakspearises," he with gratuitous rancour turns it into "he Newmanises."

Some words which with the Biblical translators seem to have been noble, I should not now dare to use in the primitive sense. For instance, "His iniquity shall fall upon his own *pate*." Yet I think *pate* a good metaphorical word and have used it of the sea-waves, in a bold passage, Il. 13, 795:

Then ón rush'd théy, with weight and mass like to a troublous
 whirlwind,
Which from the thundercloud of Jove down on the campaign plumpeth,
And doth the briny flood bestir with an unearthly uproar:
Then in the everbrawling sea full many a billow splasheth,
Hollow, and bald with hoary *pate*, one racing after other.

Is there really no "mighty current" here, to sweep off petty criticism?

I have a remark on the strong physical word "plumpeth" here used. It is fundamentally Milton's "plump down he drops ten thousand fathom deep;" *plumb* and *plump* in this sense are clearly the same root. I confess I have not been able to find the *verb* in an old writer, though it is so common now. Old writers do not say "to plumb down," but "to *drop* plumb down." Perhaps in a second edition (if I reach to it), I may alter the words to "plumb . . . droppeth" on this ground; but I do turn sick at the mawkishness of critics, one of whom, who ought to know better, tells me that the word *plump* reminds him "of the crinolined hoyden of a boarding-school"!! If he had said, "It is too like the phrase of a sailor, of a peasant, of a schoolboy," this objection would be at least intelligible. However: the word is intended to express the *violent impact of a body descending from aloft*, and it *does* express it.

Mr Arnold censures me for representing Achilles as *yelling*. He is depicted by the poet as in the most violent physical rage, boiling over with passion and wholly uncontrouled. He smacks his two thighs at once; he rolls on the ground, μέγας μεγαλωστὶ; he defiles his hair with dust; he rends it; he grinds his teeth; fire flashes from his eyes; but—he may not "yell," that would not be *comme il faut!* We shall agree, that in peace nothing so becomes a hero as modest stillness; but that "Peleus' son, insatiate of combat," full of the fiercest pent-up passion, should vent a little of it in a *yell*, seems to me quite in place. That the Greek ἰάχων is not necessarily to be so rendered, I am aware; but it is a very vigorous word, like *peal* and *shriek;* neither of which would here suit. I sometimes render it *skirl:* but "battle-yell" is a received rightful phrase. Achilles is not a stately Virgilian *pius Æneas*, but is a far wilder barbarian.

After Mr Arnold has laid upon me the sins of Shakspeare, he amazes me by adding, pp. 263, 264: "The idiomatic language of Shakspeare, such language as 'prate of his *whereabout*,' '*jump* the life to come,' 'the damnation of his *taking-off*,' '*quietus make* with a bare bodkin,' should be carefully observed by the translator of Homer; although in every case he will have to decide for himself, whether the use, by him, of Shakspeare's liberty, will or will not clash with his indispensable duty of nobleness."

Of the Shakspearianisms here italicised by Mr Arnold, there is not one which I could endure to adopt. "His whereabout," I regard as the flattest prose. (The word *prate* is a plebeian which I admit in its own low places; but how Mr Arnold can approve of it, consistently with his attacks on me, I do not understand.) Damnation and Taking-off (for Guilt and Murder), and Jump, I absolutely reject; and "quietus make" would be nothing but an utterly inadmissible *quotation* from Shakspeare. *Jump* as an active verb is to me monstrous, but *Jump* is just the sort of modern prose word which is not noble. *Leap*, *Bound*, for great action, *Skip*, *Frisk*, *Gambol* for smaller, are all good.

I have shown against Mr Arnold—(1) that Homer was out-and-out antiquated to the Athenians, even when perfectly understood by them; (2) that his conceptions, similes, phraseology and epithets are habitually quaint, strange, unparalleled in Greek literature; and pardonable only to semibarbarism; (3) that they are intimately related to his noblest excellences; (4) that many words are so peculiar as to be still doubtful to us; (5) I have indicated that some of his descriptions and conceptions are horrible to us, though they are not so to his barbaric auditors; (6) that considerable portions of the poem are not poetry, but rhythmical prose like Horace's Satires, and are interesting to us not as poetry but as portraying the manners or sentiments of the day. I now add (7) what is inevitable in all high and barbaric poetry, perhaps in all high poetry, many of his energetic descriptions are expressed in *coarse physical words.* I do not here attempt proof, for it might need a treatise: but I give one illustration; Il. 13, 136, Τρῶες προὔτυψαν ἀολλέες. Cowper, misled by the *ignis fatuus* of "stateliness," renders it absurdly

> *The pow'rs of Ilium* gave the first assault,
> *Embattled* close;

but it is strictly, "The Trojans *knocked-forward* (or, thumped, *butted*, forward) in close pack." The verb is too coarse for later polished prose, and even the adjective is very strong (*packed together*). I believe, that "Forward in *pack* the Troians *pitch'd*," would not be really unfaithful to the Homeric colour; and I maintain that "Forward in mass the Troians pitch'd," would be an irreprovable rendering.

Dryden in this respect is in entire harmony with Homeric style. No critic deals fairly with me in isolating any of these strong words, and then appealing to his readers whether I am not ignoble. Hereby he deprives me of the ἀγὼν, the "mighty current" of Mr Arnold, and he misstates the problem; which is, whether the word is suitable, *then* and *there*, for the work required of it, as the coalman at the pit, the clown in the furrow, the huntsman in the open field.

3. There is a small number of words not natural plebeians, but patricians on which a most unjust bill of attainder has been passed, which I seek to reverse. On the first which I name, Mr Arnold will side with me, because it is a Biblical word, *wench*. In Lancashire I believe that at the age of about sixteen a "girl" turns into "a wench," or as we say "a young woman." In Homer, "girl" and "young woman" are alike inadmissible; "maid" or "maiden" will not always suit, and "wench" is the natural word. I do not know that I have used it three times, but I claim a right of using it, and protest against allowing the heroes of slang to deprive us of excellent words by their perverse misuse. If the imaginations of some men are always in satire and in low slang, so much the worse for them: but the more we yield to such demands, the more will be exacted. I expect, before long, to be told that *brick* is an ignoble word, meaning a jolly fellow, and that *sell*, *cut* are out of place in Homer. My metre, it seems, is inadmissible with some, because it is

the metre of Yankee Doodle! as if Homer's metre were not that of the Margites. Every noble poem is liable to be travestied, as the Iliad and Æschylus and Shakspeare have been. Every burlesque writer uses the noble metre, and caricatures the noble style. Mr Arnold says, I must not render τανύπεπλος "trailing-rob'd," because it reminds him of "long petticoats sweeping a dirty pavement." What a confession as to the state of his imagination! Why not, of "a queen's robe trailing on a marble pavement"? Did he never read

πέπλον μὲν κατέχευεν ἑανὸν πατρὸς ἐτ’ οὔδει?

I have digressed: I return to words which have been misunderstood. A second word is of more importance, *Imp;* which properly means a Graft. The best translation of ὦ Λήδας ἔρνος to my mind, is, "O Imp of Leda!" for neither "bud of Leda," nor "scion of Leda" satisfy me; much less "sprig" or "shoot of Leda." The theological writers so often used the phrase "imp of Satan" for "child of the devil," that (since Bunyan?) the vulgar no longer understand that *imp* means *scion*, *child*, and suppose it to mean "little devil." A Reviewer has omitted to give his unlearned readers any explanation of the word (though I carefully explained it) and calls down their indignation upon me by his censures, which I hope proceeded from carelessness and ignorance.

Even in Spenser's Fairy Queen the word retains its rightful and noble sense:

Well worthy *imp!* then said the lady, etc.,

and in North's Plutarch,

"He took upon him to protect him from them all, and not to suffer so goodly an *imp* [Alcibiades] to lose the good fruit of his youth."

Dryden uses the verb, To imp; to graft, insert.

I was quite aware that I claimed of my readers a certain strength of mind, when I bid them to forget the defilements which vulgarity has shed over the noble word Imp, and carry their imaginations back two or three centuries: but I did not calculate that any critic would call Dainty grotesque. This word is equivalent in meaning to Delicate and Nice, but has precisely the epical character in which both those words are deficient. For instance, I say, that after the death of Patroclus, the coursers "stood motionless,"

> Drooping tŏwārd the ground their heads, and down their plaintive eyelids
> Did warm tears trickle to the ground, their charioteer bewailing.
> Defilêd were their *dainty* manes, over the yoke-strap dropping.

A critic who objects to this, has to learn English from my translation. Does he imagine that Dainty can mean nothing but "over-particular as to food"?

In the compound Dainty-cheek'd, Homer shows his own epic peculiarity. It is imitated in the similar word εὐπάρᾳος applied to the Gorgon Medusa by Pindar: but not in the Attics. I have somewhere read, that the rudest conception of female beauty is that of a brilliant red *plump* cheek; such as an English clown admires (was this what Pindar meant?); the second stage looks to the delicacy of tint in the cheek (this is Homer's καλλιπάρῃος:) the third looks to shape (this is the εὔμορφος of the Attics, the *formosus* of the Latins, and is seen in the Greek sculpture); the fourth and highest looks to moral expression: this is the idea of Christian Europe. That Homer rests exclusively in the second or semibarbaric stage, it is not for me to say, but, as far as I am able, to give to the readers of my translation materials for their own judgment. From the vague word εἶδος, *species*, *appearance*, it cannot be positively inferred whether the poet had an eye for Shape. The epithets curl-eyed and fine-ankled decidedly suggest that he had; except that his application of the former to the entire nation of the Greeks makes it seem to be of foreign tradition, and as unreal as brazen-*mailed*.

Another word which has been ill-understood and ill-used, is *dapper*. Of the epithet dappergreav'd for ἐϋκνημὶς I certainly am not enamoured, but I have not yet found a better rendering. It is easier to carp at my phrase, than to suggest a better. The word *dapper* in Dutch = German *tapfer*; and like the Scotch *braw* or *brave* means with us *fine*, *gallant*, *elegant*. I have read the line of an old poet,

> The dapper words which lovers use,

for *elegant*, I suppose; and so "the dapper does" and "dapper elves" of Milton must refer to elegance or refined beauty. What is there[1] ignoble in such a word? "Elegant" and "pretty" are inadmissible in epic poetry: "dapper" is logically equivalent, and *has the epic colour*. Neither "fair" nor "comely" here suit. As to the school translation of "wellgreav'd," every common Englishman on hearing the sound receives it as "wellgrieved," and to me it is very unpleasing. A part of the mischief, a large part of it, is in the word *greave;* for *dapper-girdled* is on the whole well-received. But what else can we say for *greave?* leggings? gambados?

Much perhaps remains to be learnt concerning Homer's perpetual epithets. My very learned colleague Goldstücke, Professor of Sanscrit, is convinced that the epithet *cow-eyed* of the Homeric Juno is an echo of the notion of Hindoo poets, that (if I remember his statement) "the sunbeams are the *cows* of heaven." The sacred qualities of the Hindoo cow are perhaps not to be forgotten. I have myself been struck by the phrase διϊπετέος ποτάμοιο as akin to the idea that the Ganges falls from Mount Meru, the Hindoo Olympus. Also the meaning of two other epithets has been revealed to me from the pictures of Hindoo ladies. First, *curl-eyed*, to which I have referred above; secondly, *rosy-fingered Aurora*. For Aurora is an "Eastern lady"; and, as such, has the tips of her fingers dyed rosy-red, whether by henna or by some more brilliant drug. Who shall say that the kings and warriors of Homer do not derive from the East their epithet "Jove-nurtured"? or that this or that goddess is not called "golden-throned" or "fair-throned" in allusion to Assyrian sculptures or painting, as Rivers probably drew their later poetical attribute "bull-headed" from the sculpture of fountains? It is a familiar remark, that Homer's poetry presupposes a vast pre-existing art and material. Much in him was traditional. Many of his wild legends came from Asia. He is to us much beside a poet; and that a translator should assume to cut him down to the standard of modern taste, is a thought which all the higher minds of this age have outgrown. How much better is that reverential Docility, which with simple and innocent wonder, receives the oddest notions of antiquity as material of instruction yet to be revealed, than the selfcomplacent Criticism, which pronouncing everything against modern taste to be grotesque[1] and contemptible, squares the facts to its own "Axioms"! *Homer is noble: but this or that epithet is not noble: therefore we must explode it from Homer!* I value, I maintain, I struggle for the "high a priori road" in its own place; but certainly not in historical literature. To read Homer's own thoughts is to wander in a world abounding with freshness: but if we insist on treading round and round in our own footsteps, we shall never ascend those heights whence the strange region is to be seen. Surely an intelligent learned critic ought to inculcate on the unlearned, that if they would get instruction from Homer, they must not expect to have their ears tickled by a musical sound as of a namby-pamby poetaster; but must look on a metre as doing its duty, when it "strings the mind up to the necessary pitch" in elevated passages; and that instead of demanding of a translator everywhere a rhythmical perfection which perhaps can only be attained by a great sacrifice of higher qualities, they should be willing to submit to a small part of that ruggedness, which Mr Arnold cheerfully bears in Homer himself through the loss of the Digamma. And now, for a final protest. To be *stately* is not to be *grand*. Nicolas of Russia may have been stately like Cowper, Garibaldi is grand like the true Homer. A diplomatic address is stately; it is not grand, nor often noble. To expect a translation of Homer to be *pervadingly elegant*, is absurd; Homer is not such, any more than is the side of an Alpine mountain. The elegant and the picturesque are seldom identical, however much of delicate beauty may be interstudded in the picturesque; but this has always got plenty of what is shaggy and uncouth without which contrast the full delight of beauty would not be attained. I think Moore in his characteristic way tells of a beauty

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[1] I observe that Lord Lyttelton renders Milton's *dapper elf* by ῥαδινὰ, "softly moving."

> Shining on, shining on, by no shadow made tender,
> Till love falls asleep in the sameness of splendour.

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[1] Mr Arnold calls it an unfortunate sentence of mine: "I ought to be quaint; I ought not to be grotesque." I am disposed to think him right, but for reasons very opposite to those which he assigns. I have "unfortunately" given to querulous critics a cue for attacking me unjustly. I should rather have said: "We ought to be *quaint*, and not to shrink from that which the fastidious modern will be sure to call *grotesque* in English, when he is too blunted by habit, or too poor a scholar to discern it in the Greek."

Such certainly is not Homer's. His beauty, when at its height, is *wild* beauty: it smells of the mountain and of the sea. If he be compared to a noble animal, it is not to such a spruce rubbed-down Newmarket racer as our smooth translators would pretend, but to a wild horse of the Don Cossacks: and if I, instead of this, present to the reader nothing but a Dandie Dinmont's pony, this, as a first approximation, is a valuable step towards the true solution.

Before the best translation of the Iliad of which our language is capable can be produced, the English public has to unlearn the false notion of Homer which his *deliberately faithless* versifiers have infused. Chapman's conceits unfit his translation for instructing the public, even if his rhythm "jolted" less, if his structure were simpler, and his dialect more intelligible. My version, if allowed to be read, will prepare the public to receive a version better than mine. I regard it as a question about to open hereafter, whether a translator of Homer ought not to adopt the old dissyllabic *landis*,, *houndis*, *hartis*, etc., instead of our modern unmelodious *lands*, *hounds*, *harts*; whether the *ye* or *y* before the past participle may not be restored; the want of which confounds that participle with the past tense. Even the final -en of the plural of verbs (we dancen, they singen, etc.) still subsists in Lancashire. It deserves consideration whether by a *few* such slight grammatical retrogressions into antiquity a translator of Homer might not add much melody to his poem and do good service to the language.

XII

LAST WORDS ON TRANSLATING HOMER

A Reply to Francis W. Newman

By Matthew Arnold

"Multi, qui persequuntur me, et tribulant me: a testimoniis non declinavi."

Buffon, the great French naturalist, imposed on himself the rule of steadily abstaining from all answer to attacks made upon him. "Je n'ai jamais répondu à aucune critique," he said to one of his friends who, on the occasion of a certain criticism, was eager to take up arms in his behalf; "je n'ai jamais répondu à aucune critique, et je garderai le même silence sur celle-ci." On another occasion, when accused of plagiarism, and pressed by his friends to answer, "Il vaut mieux," he said, "laisser ces mauvaises gens dans l'incertitude." Even when reply to an attack was made successfully, he disapproved of it, he regretted that those he esteemed should make it. Montesquieu, more sensitive to criticism than Buffon, had answered, and successfully answered, an attack made upon his great work, the *Esprit des Lois*, by the *Gazetier Janséniste*. This Jansenist Gazetteer was a periodical of those times, a periodical such as other times, also, have occasionally seen, very pretentious, very aggressive, and, when the point to be seized was at all a delicate one, very apt to miss it. "Notwithstanding this example," said Buffon, who, as well as Montesquieu, had been attacked by the Jansenist Gazetteer, "notwithstanding this example, I think I may promise my course will be different. I shall not answer a single word."

And to anyone who has noticed the baneful effects of the controversy, with all its train of personal rivalries and hatreds, on men of letters or men of science; to anyone who has observed how it tends to impair, not only their dignity and repose, but their productive force, their genuine activity; how it always checks the free play of the spirit, and often ends by stopping it altogether; it can hardly seem doubtful that the rule thus imposed on himself by Buffon was a wise one. His own career, indeed, admirably shows the wisdom of it. That career was as glorious as it was serene; but it owed to its serenity no small part of its glory. The regularity and completeness with which he gradually built up the great work which he had designed, the air of equable majesty which he shed over it, struck powerfully the imagination of his contemporaries, and surrounded Buffon's fame with a peculiar respect and dignity. "He is," said Frederick the Great of him, "the man who has best deserved the great celebrity which he has acquired." And this regularity of production, this equableness of temper, he maintained by his resolute disdain of personal controversy.

Buffon's example seems to me worthy of all imitation, and in my humble way I mean always to follow it. I never have replied, I never will reply, to any literary assailant; in such encounters tempers are lost, the world laughs, and truth is not served. Least of all should I think of using this Chair as a place from which to carry on such a conflict. But when a learned and estimable man thinks he has reason to complain of language used by me in this Chair, when he attributes to me intentions and feelings towards him which are far from my heart, I owe him some explanation, and I am bound, too, to make the explanation as public as the words which gave offence. This is the reason why I revert once more to the subject of translating Homer. But being thus brought back to that subject, and not wishing to occupy you solely with an explanation which, after all, is Mr. Newman's affair and mine, not the public's, I shall take the opportunity, not certainly to enter into any conflict with anyone, but to try to establish our old friend, the coming translator of Homer, yet a little firmer in the positions which I hope we have now secured for him; to protect him against the danger of relaxing, in the confusion of dispute, his attention to those matters which alone I consider important for him; to save him from losing sight, in the dust of the attacks delivered over it, of the real body of Patroclus. He will probably, when he arrives, requite my solicitude very ill, and be in haste to disown his benefactor: but my interest in him is so sincere that I can disregard his probable ingratitude.

First, however, for the explanation. Mr Newman has published a reply to the remarks which I made on his translation of the *Iliad*. He seems to think that the respect which at the outset of those remarks I professed for him must have been professed ironically; he says that I use "forms of attack against him which he does not know how to characterise;" that I "speak scornfully" of him, treat him with "gratuitous insult, gratuitous rancour;" that I "propagate slanders" against him, that I wish to "damage him with my readers," to "stimulate my readers to despise" him. He is entirely mistaken. I respect Mr Newman sincerely; I respect him as one of the few learned men we have, one of the few who love learning for its own sake; this respect for him I had before I read his translation of the *Iliad*, I retained it while I was commenting on that translation, I have not lost it after reading his reply. Any vivacities of expression which may have given him pain I sincerely regret, and can only assure him that I used them without a thought of insult or rancour. When I took the liberty of creating the verb *to Newmanise*, my intentions were no more rancorous than if I had said to *Miltonise;* when I exclaimed, in my astonishment at his vocabulary, "With whom can Mr Newman have lived?" I meant merely to convey, in a familiar form of speech, the sense of bewilderment one has at finding a person to whom words one thought all the world knew seem strange, and words one thought entirely strange, intelligible. Yet this simple expression of my bewilderment Mr Newman construes into an accusation that he is "often guilty of keeping low company," and says that I shall "never want a stone to throw at him." And what is stranger still, one of his friends gravely tells me that Mr Newman "lived with the fellows of Balliol." As if that made Mr Newman's glossary less inexplicable to me! As if he could have got his glossary from the fellows of Balliol! As if I could believe that the members of that distinguished society, of whose discourse, not so many years afterwards, I myself was an unworthy hearer, were in Mr Newman's time so far removed from the Attic purity of speech which we all of us admired, that when one of them called a calf a *bulkin*, the rest "easily understood" him; or, when he wanted to say that a newspaper-article was "proudly fine," it mattered little whether he said it was that or *bragly!* No; his having lived with the fellows of Balliol does not explain Mr Newman's glossary to me. I will no longer ask "with whom he can have lived," since that gives him offence; but I must still declare that where he got his test of rarity or intelligibility for words is a mystery to me.

That, however, does not prevent me from entertaining a very sincere respect for Mr Newman, and since he doubts it, I am glad to reiterate my expression of it. But the truth of the matter is this: I unfeignedly admire Mr Newman's ability and learning; but I think in his translation of Homer he has employed that ability and learning quite amiss. I think he has chosen quite the wrong field for turning his ability and learning to account. I think that in England, partly from the want of an Academy, partly from a national habit of intellect to which that want of an Academy is itself due, there exists too little of what I may call a public force of correct literary opinion, possessing within certain limits a clear sense of what is right and wrong, sound and unsound, and sharply recalling men of ability and learning from any flagrant misdirection of these their advantages. I think, even, that in our country a powerful misdirection of this kind is often more likely to subjugate and pervert opinion than to be checked and corrected by it.[1] Hence a chaos of false tendencies, wasted efforts, impotent conclusions, works which ought never to have been undertaken. Anyone who can introduce a little order into this chaos by establishing in any quarter a single sound rule of criticism, a single rule which clearly marks what is right as right, and what is wrong as wrong, does a good deed; and his deed is so much the better the greater force he counteracts of learning and ability applied to thicken the chaos. Of course no one can be sure that he has fixed any such rules; he can only do his best to fix them; but somewhere or other, in the literary opinion of Europe, if not in the literary opinion of one nation, in fifty years, if not in five, there is a final judgment on these matters, and the critic's work will at last stand or fall by its true merits.

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[1] "It is the fact, that scholars of fastidious refinement, but of a judgment which I think far more masculine than Mr Arnold's, have passed a most encouraging sentence on large specimens of my translation. I at present count eight such names."—"Before venturing to print, I sought to ascertain how unlearned women and children would accept my verses. I could boast how children and half-educated women have extolled them, how greedily a working man has inquired for them, without knowing who was the translator."—Mr Newman's Reply, pp. 276, 283 *supra*.

Meanwhile, the charge of having in one instance misapplied his powers, of having once followed a false tendency, is no such grievous charge to bring against a man; it does not exclude a great respect for himself personally, or for his powers in the happiest manifestations of them. False tendency is, I have said, an evil to which the artist or the man of letters in England is peculiarly prone; but everywhere in our time he is liable to it,—the greatest as well as the humblest. "The first beginnings of my *Wilhelm Meister*," says Goethe, "arose out of an obscure sense of the great truth that man will often attempt something of which nature has denied him the proper powers, will undertake and practise something in which he cannot become skilled. An inward feeling warns him to desist" (yes, but there are, unhappily, cases of absolute judicial blindness!), "nevertheless he cannot get clear in himself about it, and is driven along a false road to a false goal, without knowing how it is with him. To this we may refer everything which goes by the name of false tendency, dilettantism, and so on. A great many men waste in this way the fairest portion of their lives, and fall at last into wonderful delusion." Yet after all, Goethe adds, it sometimes happens that even on this false road a man finds, not indeed that which he sought, but something which is good and useful for him; "like Saul, the son of Kish, who went forth to look for his father's asses, and found a kingdom." And thus false tendency as well as true, vain effort as well as fruitful, go together to produce that great movement of life, to present that immense and magic spectacle of human affairs, which from boyhood to old age fascinates the gaze of every man of imagination, and which would be his terror, if it were not at the same time his delight.

So Mr Newman may see how wide-spread a danger it is, to which he has, as I think, in setting himself to translate Homer, fallen a prey. He may be well satisfied if he can escape from it by paying it the tribute of a single work only. He may judge how unlikely it is that I should "despise" him for once falling a prey to it. I know far too well how exposed to it we all are; how exposed to it I myself am. At this very moment, for example, I am fresh from reading Mr Newman's Reply to my Lectures, a reply full of that erudition in which (as I am so often and so good-naturedly reminded, but indeed I know it without being reminded) Mr Newman is immeasurably my superior. Well, the demon that pushes us all to our ruin is even now prompting me to follow Mr Newman into a discussion about the digamma, and I know not what providence holds me back. And some day, I have no doubt, I shall lecture on the language of the Berbers, and give him his entire revenge.

But Mr Newman does not confine himself to complaints on his own behalf, he complains on Homer's behalf too. He says that my "statements about Greek literature are against the most notorious and elementary fact;" that I "do a public wrong to literature by publishing them;" and that the Professors to whom I appealed in my three Lectures, "would only lose credit if they sanctioned the use I make of their names." He does these eminent men the kindness of adding, however, that "whether they are pleased with this parading of their names in behalf of paradoxical error, he may well doubt," and that "until they endorse it themselves, he shall treat my process as a piece of forgery." He proceeds to discuss my statements at great length, and with an erudition and ingenuity which nobody can admire more than I do. And he ends by saying that my ignorance is great.

Alas! that is very true. Much as Mr Newman was mistaken when he talked of my rancour, he is entirely right when he talks of my ignorance. And yet, perverse as it seems to say so, I sometimes find myself wishing, when dealing with these matters of poetical criticism, that my ignorance were even greater than it is. To handle these matters properly there is needed a poise so perfect that the least overweight in any direction tends to destroy the balance. Temper destroys it, a crotchet destroys it, even erudition may destroy it. To press to the sense of the thing itself with which one is dealing, not to go off on some collateral issue about the thing, is the hardest matter in the world. The "thing itself" with which one is here dealing, the critical perception of poetic truth, is of all things the most volatile, elusive, and evanescent; by even pressing too impetuously after it, one runs the risk of losing it. The critic of poetry should have the finest tact, the nicest moderation, the most free, flexible, and elastic spirit imaginable; he should be indeed the "ondoyant et divers," the *undulating and diverse* being of Montaigne. The less he can deal with his object simply and freely, the more things he has to take into account in dealing with it, the more, in short, he has to encumber himself, so much the greater force of spirit he needs to retain his elasticity. But one cannot exactly have this greater force by wishing for it; so, for the force of spirit one has, the load put upon it is often heavier than it will well bear. The late Duke of Wellington said of a certain peer that "it was a great pity his education had been so far too much for his abilities." In like manner, one often sees erudition out of all proportion to its owner's critical faculty. Little as I know, therefore, I am always apprehensive, in dealing with poetry, lest even that little should prove "too much for my abilities."

With this consciousness of my own lack of learning, nay, with this sort of acquiescence in it, with this belief that for the labourer in the field of poetical criticism learning has its disadvantages, I am not likely to dispute with Mr Newman about matters of erudition. All that he says on these matters in his Reply I read with great interest; in general I agree with him; but only, I am sorry to say, up to a certain point. Like all learned men, accustomed to desire definite rules, he draws his conclusions too absolutely; he wants to include too much under his rules; he does not quite perceive that in poetical criticism the shade, the fine distinction, is everything; and that, when he has once missed this, in all he says he is in truth but beating the air. For instance: because I think Homer noble, he imagines I must think him elegant; and in fact he says in plain words that I do think him so, that to me Homer seems "pervadingly elegant." But he does not. Virgil is elegant, "pervadingly elegant," even in passages of the highest emotion:

O, ubi campi,
Spercheosque, et virginibus bacchata Lacænis
Taygeta![1]

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[1] "O for the fields of Thessaly and the streams of Spercheios! O for the hills alive with the dances of the Laconian maidens, the hills of Taygetus!"—*Georgics*, ii. 486.

Even there Virgil, though of a divine elegance, is still elegant, but Homer is not elegant; the word is quite a wrong one to apply to him, and Mr Newman is quite right in blaming anyone he finds so applying it. Again; arguing against my assertion that Homer is not quaint, he says: "It is quaint to call waves *wet*, milk *white*, blood *dusky*, horses *single-hoofed*, words *winged*, Vulcan *Lobfoot* (Κυλλοποδίων), a spear *longshadowy*," and so on. I find I know not how many distinctions to draw here. I do not think it quaint to call waves *wet*, or milk *white*, or words *winged;* but I do think it quaint to call horses *single-hoofed*, or Vulcan *Lobfoot*, or a spear *longshadowy*. As to calling blood *dusky*, I do not feel quite sure; I will tell Mr Newman my opinion when I see the passage in which he calls it so. But then, again, because it is quaint to call Vulcan *Lobfoot*, I cannot admit that it was quaint to call him Κυλλοποδίων; nor that, because it is quaint to call a spear *longshadowy*, it was quaint to call it δολιχόσκιον. Here Mr Newman's erudition misleads him: he knows the literal value of the Greek so well, that he thinks his literal rendering identical with the Greek, and that the Greek must stand or fall along with his rendering. But the real question is, not whether he has given us, so to speak, full change for the Greek, but *how* he gives us our change: we want it in gold, and he gives it us in copper. Again: "It is quaint," says Mr Newman, "to address a young friend as 'O Pippin!' it is quaint to compare Ajax to an ass whom boys are belabouring." Here, too, Mr Newman goes much too fast, and his category of quaintness is too comprehensive. To address a young friend as "O Pippin!" is, I cordially agree with him, very quaint; although I do not think it was quaint in Sarpedon to address Glaucus as ὦ πέπον: but in comparing, whether in Greek or in English, Ajax to an ass whom boys are belabouring, I do not see that there is of necessity anything quaint at all. Again; because I said that *eld*, *lief*, *in sooth*, and other words, are, as Mr Newman uses them in certain places, bad words, he imagines that I must mean to stamp these words with an absolute reprobation; and because I said that "my Bibliolatry is excessive," he imagines that I brand all words as ignoble which are not in the Bible. Nothing of the kind: there are no such absolute rules to be laid down in these matters. The Bible vocabulary is to be used as an assistance, not as an authority. Of the words which, placed where Mr Newman places them, I have called bad words, everyone may be excellent in some other place. Take *eld*, for instance: when Shakspeare, reproaching man with the dependence in which his youth is passed, says:

all thy blessed youth
Becomes as aged, and doth beg the alms
Of palsied *eld*, . . .

it seems to me that *eld* comes in excellently there, in a passage of curious meditation; but when Mr Newman renders ἀγήρω τ' ἀθανάτω τε by "from *Eld* and Death exempted," it seems to me he infuses a tinge of quaintness into the transparent simplicity of Homer's expression, and so I call *eld* a bad word in that place.

Once more. Mr Newman lays it down as a general rule that "many of Homer's energetic descriptions are expressed in coarse physical words." He goes on: "I give one illustration,—Τρῶες προὔτυψαν ἀολλέες. Cowper, misled by the *ignis fatuus* of 'stateliness' renders it absurdly:

The powers of Ilium gave the first assault
Embattled close;

but it is, strictly, 'The Trojans *knocked forward* (or, thumped, butted forward) *in close pack*.' The verb is too coarse for later polished prose, and even the adjective is very strong (*packed together*). I believe that 'forward in pack the Trojans pitched,' would not be really unfaithful to the Homeric colour; and I maintain that 'forward in mass the Trojans pitched,' would be an irreprovable rendering." He actually gives us all that as if it were a piece of scientific deduction; and as if, at the end, he had arrived at an incontrovertible conclusion. But, in truth, one cannot settle these matters quite in this way. Mr Newman's general rule may be true or false (I dislike to meddle with general rules), but every part in what follows must stand or fall by itself, and its soundness or unsoundness has nothing at all to do with the truth or falsehood of Mr Newman's general rule. He first gives, as a strict rendering of the Greek, "The Trojans knocked forward (or, thumped, butted forward), in close pack." I need not say that, as a "strict rendering of the Greek," this is good; all Mr Newman's "strict renderings of the Greek," are sure to be, as such, good; but "in close pack," for ἀολλέες, seems to me to be what Mr. Newman's renderings are not always,—an excellent *poetical rendering* of the Greek; a thousand times better, certainly, than Cowper's "embattled close." Well, but Mr. Newman goes on: "I believe that, 'forward in pack the Trojans pitched, would not be really unfaithful to the Homeric colour." Here, I say, the Homeric colour is half washed out of Mr. Newman's happy rendering of ἀολλέες; while in "pitched" for προὔτυψαν, the literal fidelity of the first rendering is gone, while certainly no Homeric colour has come in its place. Finally, Mr. Newman concludes: "I maintain that 'forward in mass the Trojans pitched,' would be an irreprovable rendering." Here, in what Mr. Newman fancies his final moment of triumph, Homeric colour and literal fidelity have alike abandoned him altogether; the last stage of his translation is much worse than the second, and immeasurably worse than the first.

All this to show that a looser, easier method than Mr. Newman's must be taken, if we are to arrive at any good result in these questions. I now go on to follow Mr. Newman a little further, not at all as wishing to dispute with him, but as seeking (and this is the true fruit we may gather from criticisms upon us) to gain hints from him for the establishment of some useful truth about our subject, even when I think him wrong. I still retain, I confess, my conviction that Homer's characteristic qualities are rapidity of movement, plainness of words and style, simplicity and directness of ideas, and, above all, nobleness, the grand manner. Whenever Mr. Newman drops a word, awakens a train of thought, which leads me to see any of these characteristics more clearly, I am grateful to him; and one or two suggestions of this kind which he affords, are all that now, having expressed my sorrow that he should have misconceived my feelings towards him, and pointed out what I think the vice of his method of criticism, I have to notice in his Reply.

Such a suggestion I find in Mr. Newman's remarks on my assertion that the translator of Homer must not adopt a quaint and antiquated style in rendering him, because the impression which Homer makes upon the living scholar is not that of a poet quaint and antiquated, but that of a poet perfectly simple, perfectly intelligible. I added that we cannot, I confess, really know how Homer seemed to Sophocles, but that it is impossible to me to believe that he seemed to him quaint and antiquated. Mr Newman asserts, on the other hand, that I am absurdly wrong here; that Homer seemed "out and out" quaint and antiquated to the Athenians; that "every sentence of him was more or less antiquated to Sophocles, who could no more help feeling at every instant the foreign and antiquated character of the poetry than an Englishman can help feeling the same in reading Burns' poems." And not only does Mr Newman say this, but he has managed thoroughly to convince some of his readers of it. "Homer's Greek," says one of them, "certainly seemed antiquated to the historical times of Greece. Mr Newman, taking a far broader historical and philological view than Mr Arnold, stoutly maintains that it did seem so." And another says: "Doubtless Homer's dialect and diction were as hard and obscure to a later Attic Greek as Chaucer to an Englishman of our day."

Mr Newman goes on to say, that not only was Homer antiquated relatively to Pericles, but he is antiquated to the living scholar; and, indeed, is in himself "absolutely antique, being the poet of a barbarian age." He tells us of his "inexhaustible quaintnesses," of his "very eccentric diction;" and he infers, of course, that he is perfectly right in rendering him in a quaint and antiquated style.

Now this question, whether or no Homer seemed quaint and antiquated to Sophocles, I call a delightful question to raise. It is not a barren verbal dispute; it is a question "drenched in matter," to use an expression of Bacon; a question full of flesh and blood, and of which the scrutiny, though I still think we cannot settle absolutely, may yet give us a directly useful result. To scrutinise it may lead us to see more clearly what sort of a style a modern translator of Homer ought to adopt.

Homer's verses were some of the first words which a young Athenian heard. He heard them from his mother or his nurse before he went to school; and at school, when he went there, he was constantly occupied with them. So much did he hear of them that Socrates proposes, in the interests of morality, to have selections from Homer made, and placed in the hands of mothers and nurses, in his model republic; in order that, of an author with whom they were sure to be so perpetually conversant, the young might learn only those parts which might do them good. His language was as familiar to Sophocles, we may be quite sure, as the language of the Bible is to us.

Nay, more. Homer's language was not, of course, in the time of Sophocles, the spoken or written language of ordinary life, any more than the language of the Bible, any more than the language of poetry, is with us; but for one great species of composition, epic poetry, it was still the current language; it was the language in which everyone who made that sort of poetry composed. Everyone at Athens who dabbled in epic poetry, not only understood Homer's language, he possessed it. He possessed it as everyone who dabbles in poetry with us, possesses what may be called the poetical vocabulary, as distinguished from the vocabulary of common speech and of modern prose: I mean, such expressions as *perchance* for *perhaps*, *spake* for *spoke*, *aye* for *ever*, *don* for *put on*, *charméd* for *charm'd*, and thousands of others.

I might go to Burns and Chaucer, and, taking words and passages from them, ask if they afforded any parallel to a language so familiar and so possessed. But this I will not do, for Mr Newman himself supplies me with what he thinks a fair parallel, in its effect upon us, to the language of Homer in its effect upon Sophocles. He says that such words as *mon*, *londis*, *libbard*, *withouten*, *muchel*, give us a tolerable but incomplete notion of this parallel; and he finally exhibits the parallel in all its clearness, by this poetical specimen:

> Dat mon, quhich hauldeth Kyngis af
>   Londis yn féo, niver
> (I tell 'e) feereth aught; sith hee
>   Doth hauld hys londis yver.

Now, does Mr Newman really think that Sophocles could, as he says, "no more help feeling at every instant the foreign and antiquated character of Homer, than an Englishman can help feeling the same in hearing these lines"? Is he quite sure of it? He says he is; he will not allow of any doubt or hesitation in the matter. I had confessed we could not really know how Homer seemed to Sophocles; "Let Mr Arnold confess for himself," cries Mr Newman, "and not for me, who know perfectly well." And this is what he knows!

Mr Newman says, however, that I "play fallaciously on the words familiar and unfamiliar;" that "Homer's words may have been familiar to the Athenians (*i.e.* often heard) even when they were either not understood by them or else, being understood, were yet felt and known to be utterly foreign. Let my renderings," he continues, "be heard, as Pope or even Cowper has been heard, and no one will be 'surprised.'"

But the whole question is here. The translator must not assume that to have taken place which has not taken place, although, perhaps, he may wish it to have taken place, namely, that his diction is become an established possession of the minds of men, and therefore is, in its proper place, familiar to them, will not "surprise" them. If Homer's language was familiar, that is, often heard, then to his language words like *londis* and *libbard*, which are not familiar, offer, for the translator's purpose, no parallel. For some purpose of the philologer they may offer a parallel to it; for the translator's purpose they offer none. The question is not, whether a diction is antiquated for current speech, but whether it is antiquated for that particular purpose for which it is employed. A diction that is antiquated for common speech and common prose, may very well not be antiquated for poetry or certain special kinds of prose. "Peradventure there shall be ten found there," is not antiquated for Biblical prose, though for conversation or for a newspaper it is antiquated. "The trumpet spake not to the armèd throng," is not antiquated for poetry, although we should not write in a letter, "he *spake* to me," or say, "the British soldier is *armèd* with the Enfield rifle." But when language is antiquated for that particular purpose for which it is employed, as numbers of Chaucer's words, for instance, are antiquated for poetry, such language is a bad representative of language which, like Homer's, was never antiquated for that particular purpose for which it was employed. I imagine that Πηληϊάδεω for Πηλείδου, in Homer, no more sounded antiquated to Sophocles, than *armèd* for *arm'd*, in Milton, sounds antiquated to us; but Mr Newman's *withouten* and *muchel* do sound to us antiquated, even for poetry, and therefore they do not correspond in their effect upon us with Homer's words in their effect upon Sophocles. When Chaucer, who uses such words, is to pass current amongst us, to be familiar to us, as Homer was familiar to the Athenians, he has to be modernised, as Wordsworth and others set to work to modernise him; but an Athenian no more needed to have Homer modernised, than we need to have the Bible modernised, or Wordsworth himself.

Therefore, when Mr Newman's words *bragly*, *bulkin*, and the rest, are an established possession of our minds, as Homer's words were an established possession of an Athenian's mind, he may use them; but not till then. Chaucer's words, the words of Burns, great poets as these were, are yet not thus an established possession of an Englishman's mind, and therefore they must not be used in rendering Homer into English.

Mr Newman has been misled just by doing that which his admirer praises him for doing, by taking a "far broader historical and philological view than mine." Precisely because he has done this, and has applied the "philological view" where it was not applicable, but where the "poetical view" alone was rightly applicable, he has fallen into error.

It is the same with him in his remarks on the difficulty and obscurity of Homer. Homer, I say, is perfectly plain in speech, simple, and intelligible. And I infer from this that his translator, too, ought to be perfectly plain in speech, simple, and intelligible; ought not to say, for instance, in rendering

Οὔτε κέ σε στέλλοιμι μάχην ἐς κυδιάνειραν . . .

"Nor liefly thee would I advance to man-ennobling battle,"—and things of that kind. Mr Newman hands me a list of some twenty hard words, invokes Buttmann, Mr Malden, and M. Benfey, and asks me if I think myself wiser than all the world of Greek scholars, and if I am ready to supply the deficiencies of Liddell and Scott's *Lexicon*! But here, again, Mr Newman errs by not perceiving that the question is not one of scholarship, but of a poetical translation of Homer. This, I say, should be perfectly simple and intelligible. He replies by telling me that ἀδινὸς, εἰλίποδες, and σιγαλόεις are hard words. Well, but what does he infer from that? That the poetical translation, in his rendering of them, is to give us a sense of the difficulties of the scholar, and so is to make his translation obscure? If he does not mean that, how, by bringing forward these hard words, does he touch the question whether an English version of Homer should be plain or not plain? If Homer's poetry, as poetry, is in its general effect on the poetical reader perfectly simple and intelligible, the uncertainty of the scholar about the true meaning of certain words can never change this general effect. Rather will the poetry of Homer make us forget his philology, than his philology make us forget his poetry. It may even be affirmed that everyone who reads Homer perpetually for the sake of enjoying his poetry (and no one who does not so read him will ever translate him well), comes at last to form a perfectly clear sense in his own mind for every important word in Homer, such as ἀδινὸς, or ἠλίβατος, whatever the scholar's doubts about the word may be. And this sense is present to his mind with perfect clearness and fulness, whenever the word recurs, although as a scholar he may know that he cannot be sure whether this sense is the right one or not. But poetically he feels clearly about the word, although philologically he may not. The scholar in him may hesitate, like the father in Sheridan's play; but the reader of poetry in him is, like the governor, fixed. The same thing happens to us with our own language. How many words occur in the Bible, for instance, to which thousands of hearers do not feel sure they attach the precise real meaning; but they make out *a* meaning for them out of what materials they have at hand; and the words, heard over and over again, come to convey this meaning with a certainty which poetically is adequate, though not philologically. How many have attached a clear and poetically adequate sense to "*the beam*" and "the *mote*," though not precisely the right one! How clearly, again, have readers got a sense from Milton's words, "grate on their *scrannel* pipes," who yet might have been puzzled to write a commentary on the word *scrannel* for the dictionary! So we get a clear sense from ἀδινὸς as an epithet for grief, after often meeting with it and finding out all we can about it, even though that all be philologically insufficient; so we get a clear sense from εἰλίποδες as an epithet for cows. And this his clear poetical sense about the words, not his philological uncertainties about them, is what the translator has to convey. Words like *bragly* and *bulkin* offer no parallel to these words; because the reader, from his entire want of familiarity with the words *bragly* and *bulkin*, has no clear sense of them poetically.

Perplexed by his knowledge of the philological aspect of Homer's language, encumbered by his own learning, Mr Newman, I say, misses the poetical aspect, misses that with which alone we are here concerned. "Homer *is* odd," he persists, fixing his eyes on his own philological analysis of μώνυξ, and μέϱοψς, and Κυλλοποδίων, and not on these words in their synthetic character;—just as Professor Max Müller, going a little farther back, and fixing his attention on the elementary value of the word θυγάτηϱ, might say Homer was "odd" for using *that* word;—"if the whole Greek nation, by long familiarity, had become inobservant of Homer's oddities," of the oddities of this "noble barbarian," as Mr Newman elsewhere calls him, this "noble barbarian" with the "lively eye of the savage," "that would be no fault of mine. That would not justify Mr Arnold's blame of me for rendering the words correctly." *Correctly*,—ah, but what *is* correctness in this case? This correctness of his is the very rock on which Mr Newman has split. He is so correct that at last he finds peculiarity everywhere. The true knowledge of Homer becomes at last, in his eyes, a knowledge of Homer's "peculiarities, pleasant and unpleasant." Learned men know these "peculiarities," and Homer is to be translated because the unlearned are impatient to know them too. "That," he exclaims, "is just why people want to read an English Homer, *to know all his oddities, just as learned men do*." Here I am obliged to shake my head, and to declare that, in spite of all my respects for Mr Newman, I cannot go these lengths with him. He talks of my "monomaniac fancy that there is nothing quaint or antique in Homer." Terrible learning, I cannot help in my turn exclaiming, terrible learning, which discovers so much!

Here, then, I take my leave of Mr Newman, retaining my opinion that his version of Homer is spoiled by his making Homer odd and ignoble; but having, I hope, sufficient love for literature to be able to canvass works without thinking of persons, and to hold this or that production cheap, while retaining a sincere respect, on other grounds, for its author.

In fulfilment of my promise to take this opportunity for giving the translator of Homer a little further advice, I proceed to notice one or two other criticisms which I find, in like manner, *suggestive;* which give us an opportunity, that is, of seeing more clearly, as we look into them, the true principles on which translation of Homer should rest. This is all I seek in criticisms; and, perhaps (as I have already said) it is only as one seeks a positive result of this kind, that one can get any fruit from them. Seeking a negative result from them, personal altercation and wrangling, one gets no fruit; seeking a positive result, the elucidation and establishment of one's ideas, one may get much. Even bad criticisms may thus be made suggestive and fruitful. I declared, in a former lecture on this subject, my conviction that criticism is not the strong point of our national literature. Well, even the bad criticisms on our present topic which I meet with, serve to illustrate this conviction for me. And thus one is enabled, even in reading remarks which for Homeric criticism, for their immediate subject, have no value, which are far too personal in spirit, far too immoderate in temper, and far too heavy-handed in style, for the delicate matter they have to treat, still to gain light and confirmation for a serious idea, and to follow the Baconian injunction, *semper aliquid addiscere*, always to be adding to one's stock of observation and knowledge. Yes, even when we have to do with writers who, to quote the words of an exquisite critic, the master of us all in criticism, M. Sainte-Beuve, remind us, when they handle such subjects as our present, of "Romans of the fourth or fifth century, coming to hold forth, all at random, in African style, on papers found in the desk of Augustus, Mæcenas, or Pollio," even then we may instruct ourselves if we may regard ideas and not persons; even then we may enable ourselves to say, with the same critic describing the effect made upon him by D'Argenson's *Memoirs:* "My taste is revolted, but I learn something; *Je suis choqué mais je suis instruit.*"

But let us pass to criticisms which are suggestive directly and not thus indirectly only, criticisms by examining which we may be brought nearer to what immediately interests us, the right way of translating Homer.

I said that Homer did not rise and sink with his subject, was never to be called prosaic and low. This gives surprise to many persons, who object that parts of the *Iliad* are certainly pitched lower than others, and who remind me of a number of absolutely level passages in Homer. But I never denied that a *subject* must rise and sink, that it must have its elevated and its level regions; all I deny is, that a poet can be said to rise and sink when all that he, as a poet, can do, is perfectly well done; when he is perfectly sound and good, that is, perfect as a poet, in the level regions of his subject as well as in its elevated regions. Indeed, what distinguishes the greatest masters of poetry from all others is, that they are perfectly sound and poetical in these level regions of their subject, in these regions which are the great difficulty of all poets but the very greatest, which they never quite know what to do with. A poet may sink in these regions by being falsely grand as well as by being low; he sinks, in short, whenever he does not treat his matter, whatever it is, in a perfectly good and poetic way. But, so long as he treats it in this way, he cannot be said to *sink*, whatever his matter may do. A passage of the simplest narrative is quoted to me from Homer:—

> ὤτρυνεν δὲ ἕκαστον ἐποιχόμενος ἐπέεσσιν,
> Μέσθλην τε, Γλαῦκόν τε, Μέδοντά τε, Θερσίλοχόν τε . . .[1]

and I am asked, whether Homer does not sink *there*, whether he "*can* have intended such lines as those for poetry?" My answer is: Those lines are very good poetry indeed, poetry of the best class, *in that place*. But when Wordsworth, having to narrate a very plain matter, tries *no* to sink in narrating it, tries, in short, to be what is falsely called poetical, he does sink, although he sinks by being pompous, not by being low.

> Onward we drove beneath the Castle; caught,
> While crossing Magdalen Bridge, a glimpse of Cam,
> And at the Hoop alighted, famous inn.

That last line shows excellently how a poet may sink with his subject by resolving not to sink with it. A page or two farther on, the subject rises to grandeur, and then Wordsworth is nobly worthy of it:

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[1] *Iliad*, xvii. 216.

> The antechapel, where the statue stood
> Of Newton with his prism and silent face,
> The marble index of a mind for ever
> Voyaging through strange seas of thought, alone.

But the supreme poet is he who is thoroughly sound and poetical, alike when his subject is grand, and when it is plain: with him the subject may sink, but never the poet. But a Dutch painter does not rise and sink with his subject; Defoe, in *Moll Flanders*, does not rise and sink with his subject, in so far as an artist cannot be said to sink who is sound in his treatment of his subject, however plain it is: yet Defoe, yet a Dutch painter, may in one sense be said to sink with their subject, because though sound in their treatment of it, they are not *poetical*, poetical in the true, not the false sense of the word; because, in fact, they are not in the grand style. Homer can in no sense be said to sink with his subject, because his soundness has something more than literal naturalness about it; because his soundness is the soundness of Homer, of a great epic poet; because, in fact, he is in the grand style. So he sheds over the simplest matter he touches the charm of his grand manner; he makes everything noble. Nothing has raised more questioning among my critics than these words, *noble*, *the grand style*. People complain that I do not define these words sufficiently, that I do not tell them enough about them. "The grand style, but what *is* the grand style?" they cry; some with an inclination to believe in it, but puzzled; others mockingly and with incredulity. Alas! the grand style is the last matter in the world for verbal definition to deal with adequately. One may say of it as is said of faith: "One must feel it in order to know what it is." But, as of faith, so too one may say of nobleness, of the grand style: "Woe to those who know it not!" Yet this expression, though indefinable, has a charm; one is the better for considering it; *bonum est, nos hic esse;* nay, one loves to try to explain it, though one knows that one must speak imperfectly. For those, then, who ask the question, What is the grand style? with sincerity, I will try to make some answer, inadequate as it must be. For those who ask it mockingly I have no answer, except to repeat to them, with compassionate sorrow, the Gospel words: *Moriemini in peccatis vestris*, Ye shall die in your sins.

But let me, at anyrate, have the pleasure of again giving, before I begin to try and define the grand style, a specimen of what it *is*.

> Standing on earth, not wrapt above the pole,
> More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
> To hoarse or mute, though fall'n on evil days,
> On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues. . . .

There is the grand style in perfection; and anyone who has a sense for it, will feel it a thousand times better from repeating those lines than from hearing anything I can say about it.

Let us try, however, what *can* be said, controlling what we say by examples. I think it will be found that the grand style arises in poetry, *when a noble nature, poetically gifted, treats with simplicity or with severity a serious subject.* I think this definition will be found to cover all instances of the grand style in poetry which present themselves. I think it will be found to exclude all poetry which is not in the grand style. And I think it contains no terms which are obscure, which themselves need defining. Even those who do not understand what is meant by calling poetry noble, will understand, I imagine, what is meant by speaking of a noble nature in a man. But the noble or powerful nature —the *bedeutendes Individuum* of Goethe—is not enough. For instance, Mr Newman has zeal for learning, zeal for thinking, zeal for liberty, and all these things are noble, they ennoble a man; but he has not the poetical gift: there must be the poetical gift, the "divine faculty," also. And, besides all this, the subject must be a serious one (for it is only by a kind of licence that we can speak of the grand style in comedy); and it must be treated *with simplicity or severity*. Here is the great difficulty: the poets of the world have been many; there has been wanting neither abundance of poetical gift nor abundance of noble natures; but a poetical gift so happy, in a noble nature so circumstanced and trained, that the result is a continuous style, perfect in simplicity or perfect in severity, has been extremely rare. One poet has had the gifts of nature and faculty in unequalled fulness, without the circumstances and training which make this sustained perfection of style possible. Of other poets, some have caught this perfect strain now and then, in short pieces or single lines, but have not been able to maintain it through considerable works; others have composed all their productions in a style which, by comparison with the best, one must call secondary.

The best model of the grand style simple is Homer; perhaps the best model of the grand style severe is Milton. But Dante is remarkable for affording admirable examples of both styles; he has the grand style which arises from simplicity, and he has the grand style which arises from severity; and from him I will illustrate them both. In a former lecture I pointed out what that severity of poetical style is, which comes from saying a thing with a kind of intense compression, or in an illusive, brief, almost haughty way, as if the poet's mind were charged with so many and such grave matters, that he would not deign to treat any one of them explicitly. Of this severity the last line of the following stanza of the *Purgatory* is a good example. Dante has been telling Forese that Virgil had guided him through Hell, and he goes on:

> Indi m' han tratto su gli suoi conforti,
> Salendo e rigirando la Montagna
> *Che drizza voi che il mondo fece torti.*[1]

"Thence hath his comforting aid led me up, climbing and circling the Mountain, *which straightens you whom the world made crooked.*" These last words, "la Montagna *che drizza voi che il mondo fece torti,*" "the Mountain *which straightens you whom the world made crooked,*" for the Mountain of Purgatory, I call an excellent specimen of the grand style in severity, where the poet's mind is too full charged to suffer him to speak more explicitly. But the very next stanza is a beautiful specimen of the grand style in simplicity, where a noble nature and a poetical gift unite to utter a thing with the most limpid plainness and clearness:

> Tanto dice di farmi sua compagna
> Ch' io sarò là dove fia Beatrice;
> Quivi convien che senza lui rimagna.[2]

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[1] *Purgatory*, xxiii. 124.

[2] *Purgatory*, xxiii. 127.

"So long," Dante continues, "so long he (Virgil) saith he will bear me company, until I shall be there where Beatrice is; there it behoves that without him I remain." But the noble simplicity of that in the Italian no words of mine can render.

Both these styles, the simple and the severe, are truly grand; the severe seems, perhaps, the grandest, so long as we attend most to the great personality, to the noble nature, in the poet its author; the simple seems the grandest when we attend most to the exquisite faculty, to the poetical gift. But the simple is no doubt to be preferred. It is the more *magical:* in the other there is something intellectual, something which gives scope for a play of thought which may exist where the poetical gift is either wanting or present in only inferior degree: the severe is much more imitable, and this a little spoils its charm. A kind of semblance of this style keeps Young going, one may say, through all the nine parts of that most indifferent production, the *Night Thoughts.* But the grand style in simplicity is inimitable:

> αἰὼν ἀσφαλὴς
> οὐκ ἔγεντ᾽ οὔτ᾽ Αἰακίδᾳ παρὰ Πηλεῖ,
> οὔτε παρ᾽ ἀντιθέῳ Κάδμῳ· λέγονται μὰν βροτῶν
> ὄλβον ὑπέρτατον οἱ σχεῖν, οἵ τε καὶ χρυσαμπύκων
> μελπομενᾶν ἐν ὄρει Μοισᾶν, καὶ ἐν ἑπταπύλοις
> ἄϊον Θήβαις . . .[1]

There is a limpidness in that, a want of salient points to seize and transfer, which makes imitation impossible, except by a genius akin to the genius which produced it.

Greek simplicity and Greek grace are inimitable; but it is said that the *Iliad* may still be ballad-poetry while infinitely superior to all other ballads, and that, in my specimens of English ballad-poetry, I have been unfair. Well, no doubt there are better things in English ballad-poetry than

> Now Christ thee save, thou proud portér, . . .

but the real strength of a chain, they say, is the strength of its weakest link; and what I was trying to show you was, that the English ballad-style is not an instrument of enough compass and force to correspond to the Greek hexameter; that, owing to an inherent weakness in it as an epic style, it easily runs into one or two faults, either it is prosaic and humdrum, or, trying to avoid that fault, and to make itself lively (*se faire vif*), it becomes pert and jaunty. To show that, the passage about King Adland's porter serves very well. But these degradations are not proper to a true epic instrument, such as the Greek hexameter.

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[1] "A secure time fell to the lot neither of Peleus the son of Æacus, nor of the godlike Cadmus; howbeit these are said to have had, of all mortals, the supreme of happiness, who heard the golden-snooded Muses sing, one of them on the mountain (Pelion), the other in seven-gated Thebus."

You may say, if you like, when you find Homer's verse, even in describing the plainest matter, neither humdrum nor jaunty, that this is because he is so incomparably better a poet than other balladists, because he is Homer. But take the whole range of Greek epic poetry, take the later poets, the poets of the last ages of this poetry, many of them most indifferent, Coluthus, Tryphiodorus, Quintus of Smyrna, Nonnus. Never will you find in this instrument of the hexameter, even in their hands, the vices of the ballad-style in the weak moments of this last: everywhere the hexameter, a noble, a truly epical instrument, rather resists the weakness of its employer than lends itself to it. Quintus of Smyrna is a poet of merit, but certainly not a poet of a high order: with him, too, epic poetry, whether in the character of its prosody or in that of its diction, is no longer the epic poetry of earlier and better times, nor epic poetry as again restored by Nonnus: but even in Quintus of Smyrna, I say, the hexameter is still the hexameter; it is a style which the ballad-style, even in the hands of better poets, cannot rival. And in the hands of inferior poets, the ballad-style sinks to vices of which the hexameter, even in the hands of a Tryphiodorus, never can become guilty.

But a critic, whom it is impossible to read without pleasure, and the disguise of whose initials I am sure I may be allowed to penetrate, Mr Spedding says that he "denies altogether that the metrical movement of the English hexameter has any resemblance to that of the Greek." Of course, in that case, if the two metres in no respect correspond, praise accorded to the Greek hexameter as an epical instrument will not extend to the English. Mr Spedding seeks to establish his proposition by pointing out that the system of accentuation differs in the English and in the

Virgilian hexameter: that in the first, the accent and the long syllable (or what has to do duty as such) coincide, in the second they do not. He says that we cannot be so sure of the accent with which Greek verse should be read as of that with which Latin should; but that the lines of Homer in which the accent and the long syllable coincide, as in the English hexameter, are certainly very rare. He suggests a type of English hexameter in agreement with the Virgilian model, and formed on the supposition that "quantity is as distinguishable in English as in Latin or Greek by any ear that will attend to it." Of the truth of this supposition he entertains no doubt. The new hexameter will, Mr Spedding thinks, at least have the merit of resembling, in its metrical movement, the classical hexameter, which merit the ordinary English hexameter has not. But even with this improved hexameter he is not satisfied; and he goes on, first to suggest other meters for rendering Homer, and finally to suggest that rendering Homer is impossible.

A scholar to whom all who admire Lucretius owe a large debt of gratitude, Mr Munro, has replied to Mr Spedding. Mr Munro declares that "the accent of the old Greeks and Romans resembled our accent only in name, in reality was essentially different;" that "our English reading of Homer and Virgil has in itself no meaning;" and that "accent has nothing to do with the Virgilian hexameter." If this be so, of course the merit which Mr Spedding attributes to his own hexameter, of really corresponding with the Virgilian hexameter, has no existence. Again; in contradiction to Mr Spedding's assertion that lines in which (in our reading of them) the accent and the long syllable coincide,[1] as in the ordinary English hexameter, are "rare even in Homer," Mr Munro declares that such lines, "instead of being rare, are among the very commonest types of Homeric rhythm." Mr Spedding asserts that "quantity is as distinguishable in English as in Latin or Greek by any ear that will attend to it;" but Mr Munro replies, that in English "neither his ear nor his reason recognises any real distinction of quantity except that which is produced by accentuated and unaccentuated syllables." He therefore arrives at the conclusion that in constructing English hexameters, "quantity must be utterly discarded; and longer or shorter unaccentuated syllables can have no meaning, except so far as they may be made to produce sweeter or harsher sounds in the hands of a master."

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[1] Lines such as the first of the *Odyssey*:

Ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ . . .

It is not for me to interpose between two such combatants; and indeed my way lies, not up the highroad where they are contending, but along a bypath. With the absolute truth of their general propositions respecting accent and quantity, I have nothing to do; it is most interesting and instructive to me to hear such propositions discussed, when it is Mr Munro or Mr Spedding who discusses them; but I have strictly limited myself in these Lectures to the humble function of giving practical advice to the translator of Homer. He, I still think, must not follow so confidently, as makers of English hexameters have hitherto followed, Mr Munro's maxim, *quantity may be utterly discarded*. He must not, like Mr Longfellow, make *seventeen* a dactyl in spite of all the length of its last syllable, even though he can plead that in counting we lay the accent on the first syllable of this word. He may be far from attaining Mr Spedding's nicety of ear; may be unable to feel that "while *quantity* is a dactyl, *quiddity* is a tribrach," and that "*rapidly* is a word to which we find no parallel in Latin;" but I think he must bring himself to distinguish, with Mr Spedding, between "*th' o'er*-wearied eyelid," and "*the* wearied eyelid," as being, the one a correct ending for a hexameter, the other an ending with a false quantity in it; instead of finding, with Mr Munro, that this distinction "conveys to his mind no intelligible idea." He must temper his belief in Mr Munro's dictum, *quantity must be utterly discarded*, by mixing with it a belief in this other dictum of the same author, *two or more consonants take longer time in enunciating than one*.[1]

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[1] Substantially, however, in the question at issue between Mr Munro and Mr Spedding, I agree with Mr Munro. By the italicised words in the following sentence, "The rhythm of the Virgilian hexameter depends entirely on *cæsura*, *pause*, and a due arrangement of words," he has touched, it seems to me, in the constitution of this hexameter, the central point which Mr Spedding misses. The accent, or *heightened tone*, of Virgil in reading his own hexameters, was probably far from being the same thing as the accent or *stress* with which we read them. The general effect of each line, in Virgil's mouth, was probably therefore something widely different from what Mr Spedding assumes it to have been: an ancient's accentual reading was something which

Criticism is so apt in general to be vague and impalpable, that when it gives us a solid and definite possession, such as is Mr Spedding's parallel of the Virgilian and the English hexameter with their difference of accentuation distinctly marked, we cannot be too grateful to it. It is in the way in which Mr Spedding proceeds to press his conclusions from the parallel which he has drawn out, that his criticism seems to me to come a little short. Here even he, I think, shows (if he will allow me to say so) a little of that want of pliancy and suppleness so common among critics, but so dangerous to their criticism; he is a little too absolute in imposing his metrical laws; he too much forgets the excellent maxim of Menander, so applicable to literary criticism:—

> *Καλὸν οἱ νόμοι σφόδρ᾽ εἰσίν· ὁ δ᾽ ὁρῶν τοὺς νόμους*
> *λίαν ἀκριβῶς, συκοφάντης φαίνεται·*

"Laws are admirable things; but he who keeps his eye too closely fixed upon them, runs the risk of becoming," let us say, a purist. Mr Spedding is probably mistaken in supposing that Virgil pronounced his hexameters as Mr Spedding pronounces them. He is almost certainly mistaken in supposing that Homer pronounced his hexameters as Mr Spedding pronounces Virgil's. But this, as I have said, is not a question for us to treat; all we are here concerned with is the imitation, by the English hexameter, of the ancient hexameter *in its effect upon us moderns*. Suppose we concede to Mr Spedding that his parallel proves our accentuation of the English and of the Virgilian hexameter to be different: what are we to conclude from that; how will a criticism, not a formal, but a substantial criticism, deal with such a fact as that? Will it infer, as Mr Spedding infers, that the English hexameter, therefore, must not pretend to reproduce better than other rhythms the move-

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allowed the metrical beat of the Latin line to be far more perceptible than our accentual reading allows it to be.

On the question as to the *real* rhythm of the ancient hexameter, Mr Newman has in his *Reply* a page quite admirable for force and precision. Here he is in his element, and his ability and acuteness have their proper scope. But it is true that the *modern* reading of the ancient hexameter is what the modern hexameter has to imitate, and that the English reading of the Virgilian hexameter is as Mr Spedding describes it. Why this reading has not been imitated by the English hexameter, I have tried to point out in the text.

ment of Homer's hexameter for us, that there can be no correspondence at all between the movement of these two hexameters, that if we want to have such a correspondence, we must abandon the current English hexameter altogether, and adopt in its place a new hexameter of Mr Spedding's Anglo-Latin type, substitute for lines like the

> Clearly the rest I behold of the dark-eyed sons of Achaia . . .

of Dr Hawtrey, lines like the

> Procession, complex melodies, pause, quantity, accent,
> After Virgilian precedent and practice, in order . . .

of Mr Spedding? To infer this, is to go, as I have complained of Mr Newman for sometimes going, a great deal too fast. I think prudent criticism must certainly recognise, in the current English hexameter, a fact which cannot so lightly be set aside; it must acknowledge that by this hexameter the English ear, the genius of the English language, have, in their own way, adopted, have *translated* for themselves the Homeric hexameter; and that a rhythm which has thus grown up, which is thus, in a manner, the production of nature, has in its general type something necessary and inevitable, something which admits change only within narrow limits, which precludes change that is sweeping and essential. I think, therefore, the prudent critic will regard Mr Spedding's proposed revolution as simply impracticable. He will feel that in English poetry the hexameter, if used at all, must be, in the main, the English hexameter now current. He will perceive that its having come into existence as the representative of the Homeric hexameter, proves it to have, for the English ear, a certain correspondence with the Homeric hexameter, although this correspondence may be, from the difference of the Greek and English languages, necessarily incomplete. This incompleteness he will endeavour,[1] as he may find or fancy himself able, gradually somewhat to lessen through minor changes, suggested by the ancient hexameter, but respecting the general constitution of the modern: the notion of making it disappear altogether by the critic's inventing in his closet a new constitution of his own for the English hexameter, he will judge to be a chimerical dream.

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[1] Such a minor change I have attempted by occasionally shifting, in the first foot of the hexameter, the accent from the first syllable to the second. In the current English hexameter, it is on the first. Mr Spedding, who proposes radically to subvert the constitution of this hexameter, seems not to understand that anyone can propose to modify it partially; he can comprehend revolution in this metre, but not reform. Accordingly he asks me how I can bring myself to say, "*Bé*tween that and the ships," or "*Thére* sat fifty men;" or how I can

When, therefore, Mr Spedding objects to the English hexameter, that it imperfectly represents the movement of the ancient hexameters, I answer: We must work with the tools we have. The received English type, in its general outlines, is, for England, the necessary given type of this metre; it is by rendering the metrical beat of its pattern, not by rendering the accentual beat of it, that the English language has adapted the Greek hexameter. To render the metrical beat of its pattern is something; by effecting so much as this the English hexameter puts itself in closer relations with its original, it comes nearer to its movement than any other metre which does not even effect so much as this; but Mr Spedding is dissatisfied with it for not effecting more still, for not rendering the accentual beat too. If he

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reconcile such forcing of the accent with my own rule, that "hexameters must *read themselves*." Presently he says that he cannot believe I do pronounce these words so, but that he thinks I leave out the accent in the first foot altogether, and thus get a hexameter with only five accents. He will pardon me: I pronounce, as I suppose he himself does, if he reads the words naturally, "Be*tween* that and the ships," and "There *sát* fifty men." Mr Spedding is familiar enough with this accent on the second syllable in Virgil's hexameters; in "et *té* montosæ," or "Vel*ó*ces jaculo." Such a change is an attempt to relieve the monotony of the current English hexameter by occasionally altering the position of one of its accents; it is not an attempt to make a wholly new English hexameter by habitually altering the position of four of them. Very likely it is an unsuccessful attempt; but at anyrate it does not violate what I think is the fundamental rule for English hexameters, that may be such as to *read themselves* without necessitating, on the reader's part, any non-natural putting-on or taking-off accent. Hexameters like these of Mr Longfellow,

"In that delightful land which is washed by the Delaware's waters,"

and,

"As if they fain would appease the Dryads, whose haunts they
molested,"

violate this rule; and they are very common. I think the blemish of Mr Dart's recent meritorious version of the *Iliad* is that it contains too many of them.

asks me *why* the English hexameter has not tried to render this too, *why* it has confined itself to rendering the metrical beat, *why*, in short, it is itself, and not Mr Spedding's new hexameter, that is a question which I, whose only business is to give practical advice to a translator, am not bound to answer; but I will not decline to answer it nevertheless. I will suggest to Mr Spedding that, as I have already said, the modern hexameter is merely an attempt to imitate the effect of the ancient hexameter, as read by us moderns; that the great object of its imitation has been the hexameter of Homer; that of this hexameter such lines as those which Mr Spedding declares to be so rare, even in Homer, but which are in truth so common, lines in which the quantity and the reader's accent coincide, are, for the English reader, just from that simplicity (for him) of rhythm which they owe to this very coincidence, the master-type; that so much is this the case that one may again and again notice an English reader of Homer, in reading lines where his Virgilian accent would not coincide with the quantity, abandoning this accent, and reading the lines (as we say) *by quantity*, reading them as if he were scanning them; while foreigners neglect our Virgilian accent even in reading Virgil, read even Virgil by quantity, making the accents coincide with the long syllables. And no doubt the hexameter of a kindred language, the German, based on this mode of reading the ancient hexameter, has had a powerful influence upon the type of its English fellow. But all this shows how extremely powerful accent is for us moderns, since we find not even Greek and Latin quantity perceptible enough without it. Yet in these languages, where we have been accustomed always to look for it, it is far more perceptible to us Englishmen than in our own language, where we have not been accustomed to look for it. And here is the true reason why Mr Spedding's hexameter is not and cannot be the current English hexameter, even though it is based on the accentuation which Englishmen give to all Virgil's lines, and to many of Homer's,—that the quantity which in Greek or Latin words we feel, or imagine we feel, even though it be unsupported by accent, we do not feel or imagine we feel in English words when it is thus unsupported. For example, in repeating the Latin line

> Ipsa tibi blandos *fundent* cunabula flores,

an Englishman feels the length of the second syllable of *fundent*, although he lays the accent on the first; but in repeating Mr Spedding's line,

> Softly cometh slumber *closing* th' o'erwearied eyelid,

the English ear, full of the accent on the first syllable of *closing*, has really no sense at all of any length in its second. The metrical beat of the line is thus quite destroyed.

So when Mr Spedding proposes a new Anglo-Virgilian hexameter he proposes an impossibility; when he "denies altogether that the metrical movement of the English hexameter has *any* resemblance to that of the Greek," he denies too much; when he declares that, "were every other metre impossible, an attempt to translate Homer into English hexameters might be permitted, *but that such an attempt he himself would never read*," he exhibits, it seems to me, a little of that obduracy and over-vehemence in liking and disliking,—a remnant, I suppose, of our insular ferocity,—to which English criticism is so prone. He ought to be enchanted to meet with a good attempt in any metre, even though he would never have advised it, even though its success be contrary to all his expectations; for it is the critic's first duty—prior even to his duty of stigmatising what is bad—*to welcome everything that is good*. In welcoming this, he must at all times be ready, like the Christian convert, even to burn what he used to worship, and to worship what he used to burn. Nay, but he need not be thus inconsistent in welcoming it; he may retain all his principles: principles endure, circumstances change; absolute success is one thing, relative success another. Relative success may take place under the most diverse conditions; and it is in appreciating the good in even relative success, it is in taking into account the change of circumstances, that the critic's judgment is tested, that his versatility must display itself. He is to keep his idea of the best, of perfection, and at the same time to be willingly accessible to every second best which offers itself. So I enjoy the ease and beauty of Mr Spedding's stanza,

> Therewith to all the gods in order due . . .

I welcome it, in the absence of equally good poetry in another metre,[1] although I still think the stanza unfit to render Homer thoroughly well, although I still think other metres fit to render him better. So I concede to Mr Spedding that every form of translation, prose or verse, must more or less break up Homer in order to reproduce him; but then I urge that that form which needs to break him up least is to be preferred. So I concede to him that the test proposed by me for the translator — a competent scholar's judgment whether the translation more or less reproduces for him the effect of the original — is not perfectly satisfactory; but I adopt it as the best we can get, as the only test capable of being really applied; for Mr Spedding's proposed substitute, the translations making the same effect, more or less, upon the unlearned which the original makes upon the scholar, is a test which can never really be applied at all. These two impressions, that of the scholar, and that of the unlearned reader, can, practically, never be accurately compared; they are, and must remain, like those lines we read of in Euclid, which, though produced ever so far, can never meet. So, again, I concede that a good verse-translation of Homer, or, indeed, of any poet, is very difficult, and that a good prose-translation is much easier; but then I urge that a verse-translation, while giving the pleasure which Pope's has given, might at the same time render Homer more faithfully than Pope's; and that this being possible, we ought not to cease wishing for a source of pleasure which no prose-translation can ever hope to rival.

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[1] As I welcome another more recent attempt in stanza, — Mr Worsley's version of the *Odyssey* in Spenser's measure. Mr Worsley does me the honour to notice some remarks of mine on this measure: I had said that its greater intricacy made it a worse measure than even the ten-syllable couplet to employ for rendering Homer. He points out, in answer, that "the more complicated the correspondences in a poetical measure, the less obtrusive and absolute are the rhymes." This is true, and subtly remarked; but I never denied that the single shocks of rhyme in the couplet were more *strongly felt* than those in the stanza; I said that the more frequent recurrence of the same rhyme, in the stanza, necessarily made this measure more *intricate*. The stanza repacks Homer's matter yet more arbitrarily, and therefore changes his movement yet more radically, than the couplet. Accordingly, I imagine a nearer approach to a perfect translation of Homer is possible in the couplet, well managed, than in the stanza, however well managed. But meanwhile Mr Worsley, applying the Spenserian stanza, that beautiful romantic measure, to the most romantic poem of the ancient world; making this stanza yield him, too (what it never yielded to Byron), its treasures of fluidity and sweet ease; above all, bringing to his task a truly poetical sense and skill, has produced a version of the *Odyssey* much the most pleasing of those hitherto produced, and which is delightful to read.

For the public this may well be enough, nay, more than enough; but for the critic even this is not yet quite enough.

Wishing for such a verse-translation of Homer, believing that rhythms have natural tendencies which, within certain limits, inevitably govern them; having little faith, therefore, that rhythms which have manifested tendencies utterly un-Homeric can so change themselves as to become well adapted for rendering Homer, I have looked about for the rhythm which seems to depart least from the tendencies of Homer's rhythm. Such a rhythm I think may be found in the English hexameter, somewhat modified. I look with hope towards continued attempts at perfecting and employing this rhythm; but my belief in the immediate success of such attempts is far less confident than has been supposed. Between the recognition of this rhythm as ideally the best, and the recommendation of it to the translator for instant practical use, there must come all that consideration of circumstances, all that pliancy in foregoing, under the pressure of certain difficulties, the absolute best, which I have said is so indispensable to the critic. The hexameter is, comparatively, still unfamiliar in England; many people have a great dislike to it. A certain degree of unfamiliarity, a certain degree of dislike, are obstacles with which it is not wise to contend. It is difficult to say at present whether the dislike to this rhythm is so strong and so wide-spread that it will prevent its ever becoming thoroughly familiar. I think not, but it is too soon to decide. I am inclined to think that the dislike of it is rather among the professional critics than among the general public; I think the reception which Mr Longfellow's *Evangeline* has met with indicates this. I think that even now, if a version of the *Iliad* in English hexameters were made by a poet who, like Mr Longfellow, has that indefinable quality which renders him popular, something *attractive* in his talent, which communicates itself to his verses, it would have a great success among the general public. Yet a version of Homer in hexameters of the *Evangeline* type would not satisfy the judicious, nor is the definite establishment of this type to be desired: and one would regret that Mr Longfellow should, even to popularise the hexameter, give the immense labour required for a translation of Homer when one could not wish his work to stand. Rather it is to be wished that by the efforts of poets like Mr Longfellow in original poetry, and the efforts of less distinguished poets in the task of translation, the hexameter may gradually be made familiar to the ear of the English public; at the same time that there gradually arises, out of all these efforts, an improved type of this rhythm; a type which some man of genius may sign with the final stamp, and employ in rendering Homer; a hexameter which may be as superior to Vosse's as Shakspeare's blank verse is superior to Schiller's. I am inclined to believe that all this travail will actually take place, because I believe that modern poetry is actually in want of such an instrument as the hexameter.

In the meantime, whether this rhythm be destined to success or not, let us steadily keep in mind what originally made us turn to it. We turned to it because we required certain Homeric characteristics in a translation of Homer, and because all other rhythms seemed to find, from different causes, great difficulties in satisfying this our requirement. If the hexameter is impossible, if one of these other rhythms must be used, let us keep this rhythm always in mind of our requirements and of its own faults, let us compel it to get rid of these latter as much as possible. It may be necessary to have recourse to blank verse; but then blank verse must *de-Cowperise* itself, must get rid of the habits of stiff self-retardation which make it say "*Not fewer* shone," for "*So many shone.*" Homer moves swiftly: blank verse *can* move swiftly if it likes, but it must remember that the movement of such lines as

> A thousand fires were burning, and by each . . .

is just the slow movement which makes us despair of it. Homer moves with noble ease: blank verse must not be suffered to forget that the movement of

> Came they not over from sweet Lacedæmon . . .

is ungainly. Homer's expression of his thought is simple as light: we know how blank verse affects such locutions as

> While the steeds *mouthed their corn aloof* . . .

and such models of expressing one's thought are sophisticated and artificial.

One sees how needful it is to direct incessantly the English translator's attention to the essential characteristics of Homer's poetry, when so accomplished a person as Mr Spedding, recognising these characteristics as indeed Homer's, admitting them to be essential, is led by the ingrained habits and tendencies of English blank verse thus repeatedly to lose sight of them in translating even a few lines. One sees this yet more clearly, when Mr Spedding, taking me to task for saying that the blank verse used for rendering Homer "must not be Mr Tennyson's blank verse," declares that in most of Mr Tennyson's blank verse all Homer's essential characteristics, "rapidity of movement, *plainness of words and style, simplicity and directness of ideas*, and, above all, nobleness of manner, are as conspicuous as in Homer himself." This shows, it seems to me, how hard it is for English readers of poetry, even the most accomplished, to feel deeply and permanently what Greek plainness of thought and Greek simplicity of expression really are: they admit the importance of these qualities in a general way, but they have no ever-present sense of them; and they easily attribute them to any poetry which has other excellent qualities, and which they very much admire. No doubt there are plainer things in Mr Tennyson's poetry than the three lines I quoted; in choosing them, as in choosing a specimen of ballad-poetry, I wished to bring out clearly, by a strong instance, the qualities of thought and style to which I was calling attention; but when Mr Spedding talks of a plainness of thought *like Homer's*, of a plainness of speech *like Homer's*, and says that he finds these constantly in Mr Tennyson's poetry, I answer that these I do not find there at all. Mr Tennyson is a most distinguished and charming poet; but the very essential characteristic of his poetry is, it seems to me, an extreme subtlety and curious elaborateness of thought, an extreme subtlety and curious elaborateness of expression. In the best and most characteristic productions of his genius, these characteristics are most prominent. They are marked characteristics, as we have seen, of the Elizabethan poets; they are marked, though not the essential, characteristics of Shakspeare himself. Under the influences of the nineteenth century, under wholly new conditions of thought and culture, they manifest themselves in Mr Tennyson's poetry in a wholly new way. But they are still there. The essential bent of his poetry is towards such expressions as

> Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars;

> O'er the sun's bright eye
> Drew the vast eyelid of an inky cloud;

> When the cairned mountain was a shadow, sunned
> The world to peace again;

> The fresh young captains flashed their glittering teeth,
> The huge bush-bearded barons heaved and blew;

> He bared the knotted column of his throat,
> The massive square of his heroic breast,
> And arms on which the standing muscle sloped
> As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,
> Running too vehemently to break upon it.

And this way of speaking is the least *plain*, the most *un-Homeric*, which can possibly be conceived. Homer presents his thought to you just as it wells from the source of his mind: Mr Tennyson carefully distils his thought before he will part with it. Hence comes, in the expression of the thought, a heightened and elaborate air. In Homer's poetry it is all natural thoughts in natural words; in Mr Tennyson's poetry it is all distilled thoughts in distilled words. Exactly this heightening and elaboration may be observed in Mr Spedding's

> While the steeds *mouthed their corn aloof*

(an expression which might have been Mr Tennyson's), on which I have already commented; and to one who is penetrated with a sense of the real simplicity of Homer, this subtle sophistication of the thought is, I think, very perceptible even in such lines as these,

> And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
> Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy,

which I have seen quoted as perfectly Homeric. Perfect simplicity can be obtained only by a genius of which perfect simplicity is an essential characteristic.

So true is this, that when a genius essentially subtle, or a genius which, from whatever cause, is in its essence not truly and broadly simple, determines to be perfectly plain, determines not to admit a shade of subtlety or curiosity into its expression, it cannot ever then attain real simplicity; it can only attain a semblance of simplicity.[1] French criticism, richer in its vocabulary than ours, has invented a useful word to distinguish this semblance (often very beautiful and valuable) from the real quality. The real quality it calls *simplicité*, the semblance *simplesse*. The one is natural simplicity, the other is artificial simplicity. What is called simplicity in the productions of a genius essentially not simple, is, in truth, *simplesse*. The two are distinguishable from one another the moment they appear in company. For instance, let us take the opening of the narrative in Wordsworth's *Michael:*

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a shepherd, Michael was his name;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength; his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs;
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.

Now let us take the opening of the narrative in Mr Tennyson's *Dora:*

With Farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his son,
And she his niece. He often looked at them,
And often thought, "I'll make them man and wife."

The simplicity of the first of these passages is *simplicité;* that of the second, *simplesse.* Let us take the end of the same two poems: first, of *Michael:*

The cottage which was named the Evening Star
Is gone, the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighbourhood: yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door: and the remains
Of the unfinished sheepfold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Ghyll.

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[1] I speak of poetic genius as employing itself upon narrative or dramatic poetry,—poetry in which the poet has to go out of himself and to create. In lyrical poetry, in the direct expression of personal feeling, the most subtle genius may, under the momentary pressure of passion, express itself simply. Even here, however, the native tendency will generally be discernible.

And now, of *Dora:*

> So those four abode
> Within one house together; and as years
> Went forward, Mary took another mate:
> But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

A heedless critic may call both of these passages simple if he will. Simple, in a certain sense, they both are; but between the simplicity of the two there is all the difference that there is between the simplicity of Homer and the simplicity of Moschus.

But, whether the hexameter establish itself or not, whether a truly simple and rapid blank verse be obtained or not, as the vehicle for a standard English translation of Homer, I feel sure that this vehicle will not be furnished by the ballad-form. On this question about the ballad-character of Homer's poetry, I see that Professor Blackie proposes a compromise: he suggests that those who say Homer's poetry is pure ballad-poetry, and those who deny that it is ballad-poetry at all, should split the difference between them; that it should be agreed that Homer's poems are ballads *a little*, but not so much as some have said. I am very sensible to the courtesy of the terms in which Mr Blackie invites me to this compromise; but I cannot, I am sorry to say, accept it; I cannot allow that Homer's poetry is ballad-poetry at all. A want of capacity for sustained nobleness seems to me inherent in the ballad-form when employed for epic poetry. The more we examine this proposition, the more certain, I think, will it become to us. Let us but observe how a great poet, having to deliver a narrative very weighty and serious, instinctively shrinks from the ballad-form as from a form not commensurate with his subject-matter, a form too narrow and shallow for it, and seeks for a form which has more amplitude and impressiveness. Everyone knows the *Lucy Gray* and the *Ruth* of Wordsworth. Both poems are excellent; but the subject-matter of the narrative of *Ruth* is much more weighty and impressive to the poet's own feeling than that of the narrative of *Lucy Gray*, for which latter, in its unpretending simplicity, the ballad-form is quite adequate. Wordsworth, at the time he composed *Ruth*, his great time, his *annus mirabilis*, about 1800, strove to be simple; it was his mission to be simple; he loved the ballad-form, he clung to it, because it was simple. Even in *Ruth* he tried, one may say, to use it; he would have used it if he could: but the gravity of his matter is too much for this somewhat slight form; he is obliged to give to his form more amplitude, more augustness, to shake out its folds.

The wretched parents all that night
  Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
  To serve them for a guide.

That is beautiful, no doubt, and the form is adequate to the subject-matter. But take this, on the other hand:

I, too, have passed her on the hills,
Setting her little water-mills
  By spouts and fountains wild;
Such small machinery as she turned,
Ere she had wept, ere she had mourned,
  A young and happy child.

Who does not perceive how the greater fulness and weight of his matter has here compelled the true and feeling poet to adopt a form of more *volume* than the simple ballad-form?

It is of narrative poetry that I am speaking; the question is about the use of the ballad-form for *this*. I say that for this poetry (when in the grand style, as Homer's is) the ballad-form is entirely inadequate; and that Homer's translator must not adopt it, because it even leads him, by its own weakness, away from the grand style rather than towards it. We must remember that the matter of narrative poetry stands in a different relation to the vehicle which conveys it, is not so independent of this vehicle, so absorbing and powerful in itself, as the matter of purely emotional poetry. When there comes in poetry what I may call the *lyrical cry*, this transfigures everything, makes everything grand; the simplest form may be here even an advantage, because the flame of the emotion glows through and through it more easily. To go again for an illustration to Wordsworth; our great poet, since Milton, by his performance, as Keats, I think, is our great poet by his gift and promise; in one of his stanzas to the Cuckoo, we have:

And I can listen to thee yet;
  Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
  That golden time again.

Here the lyrical cry, though taking the simple ballad-form, is as grand as the lyrical cry coming in poetry of an ampler form, as grand as the

An innocent life, yet far astray!

of *Ruth;* as the

There is a comfort in the strength of love

of *Michael.* In this way, by the occurrence of this lyrical cry, the ballad-poets themselves rise sometimes, though not so often as one might perhaps have hoped, to the grand style.

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi' their fans into their hand,
Or ere they see Sir Patrick Spence
Come sailing to the land.

O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
Wi' their gold combs in their hair,
Waiting for their ain dear lords,
For they'll see them nae mair.

But from this impressiveness of the ballad-form, when its subject-matter fills it over and over again, is, indeed, in itself, all in all, one must not infer its effectiveness when its subject-matter is not thus overpowering, in the great body of a narrative.

But, after all, Homer is not a better poet than the balladists, because he has taken in the hexameter a better instrument; he took this instrument because he was a *different* poet from them; so different, not only so much better, but so essentially different, that he has not to be classed with them at all. Poets receive their distinctive character, not from their subject, but from their application to that subject of the ideas (to quote the *Excursion*)

On God, on Nature, and on human life,

which they have acquired for themselves. In the ballad-poets in general, as in men of a rude and early stage of the world, in whom their humanity is not yet variously and fully developed, the stock of these ideas is scanty, and the ideas themselves not very effective or profound. From them the narrative itself is the great matter, not the spirit and significance which underlies the narrative. Even in later times of richly developed life and thought, poets appear who have what may be called a *balladist's mind;* in whom a fresh and lively curiosity for the outward spectacle of the world is much more strong than their sense of the inward significance of that spectacle. When they apply ideas to their narrative of human events, you feel that they are, so to speak, travelling out of their own province: in the best of them you feel this perceptibly, but in those of a lower order you feel it very strongly. Even Sir Walter Scott's efforts of this kind, even, for instance, the

> Breathes there the man with soul so dead,

or the

> O woman! in our hours of ease,

even these leave, I think, as high poetry, much to be desired; far more than the same poet's descriptions of a hunt or a battle. But Lord Macaulay's

> Then out spake brave Horatius,
> The captain of the gate:
> "To all the men upon this earth
> Death cometh soon or late."

(and here, since I have been reproached with undervaluing Lord Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*, let me frankly say that, to my mind, a man's power to detect the ring of false metal in those Lays is a good measure of his fitness to give an opinion about poetical matters at all), I say, Lord Macaulay's

> To all the men upon this earth
> Death cometh soon or late,

it is hard to read without a cry of pain. But with Homer it is very different. This "noble barbarian," this "savage with the lively eye," whose verse Mr Newman thinks, would affect us, if we could hear the living Homer, "like an elegant and simple melody from an African of the Gold Coast," is never more at home, never more nobly himself, than in applying profound ideas to his narrative. As a poet he belongs, narrative as is his poetry, and early as is his date, to an incomparably more developed spiritual and intellectual order than the balladists, or than Scott and Macaulay; he is here as much to be distinguished from them, and in the same way, as Milton is to be distinguished from them. He is, indeed, rather to be classed with Milton than with the balladists and Scott; for what he has in common with

Milton, the noble and profound application of ideas to life is the most essential part of poetic greatness. The most essentially grand and characteristic things of Homer are such things as

> ἔτλην δ', οἷ' οὔπω τις ἐπιχθόνιος βροτός ἄλλος,
> ἀνδρὸς παιδοφόνοιο ποτὶ στόμα χεῖρ' ὀρέγεσθαι,[1]

or as

> καὶ σὲ, γέρον, τὸ πρὶν μὲν ἀκούομεν ὄλβιον εἶναι,[2]

or as

> ὣς γὰρ ἐπεκλώσαντο θεοὶ δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν,
> ζώειν ἀχνυμένους· αὐτοὶ δὲ τ' ἀκηδέες εἰσίν,[3]

and of these the tone is given, far better than by anything of the balladists, by such things as the

> Io no piangeva: sì dentro impietrai:
> Piangevan elli . . .[4]

of Dante; or the

> Fall'n Cherub! to be weak is miserable

of Milton.

I suppose I must, before I conclude, say a word or two about my own hexameters; and yet truly, on such a topic, I am almost ashamed to trouble you. From those perishable objects I feel, I can truly say, a most Oriental detachment. You yourselves are witnesses how little importance, when I offered them to you, I claimed for them, how humble a function I designed them to fill. I offered them, not as specimens of a competing translation of Homer, but as illustrations of certain canons which I had been trying to establish for Homer's poetry. I said that these canons they might very well illustrate by failing as well as by succeeding: if they illustrate them in any manner, I am satisfied. I was thinking of the future translator of Homer, and trying to let him see as clearly as possible what I meant by the combination of characteristics which I assigned to Homer's poetry, by saying that this poetry was at once rapid in movement, plain in words and style, simple and direct in its ideas, and noble in manner. I do not suppose that my own hexameters are rapid in movement, plain in words and style, simple and direct in their ideas, and noble in manner; but I am in hopes that a translator, reading them with a genuine interest in his subject, and without the slightest grain of personal feeling, may see more clearly, as he reads them, what I meant by saying that Homer's poetry is all these. I am in hopes that he may be able to seize more distinctly, when he has before him my

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[1] "And I have endured—the like whereof no soul upon the earth hath yet endured—to carry to my lips the hand of him who slew my child."—*Iliad*, xxiv. 505.

[2] "Nay and thou too, old man, in times past wert, as we hear, happy."—*Iliad*, xxiv. 543. In the original this line, for mingled pathos and dignity, is perhaps without a rival even in Homer.

[3] "For so have the gods spun our destiny to us wretched mortals,—that we should live in sorrow; but they themselves are without trouble."—*Iliad*, xxiv. 525.

[4] "*I* wept not: so of stone grew I within:—*they* wept."—*Hell* xxxiii. 49 (Carlyle's Translation, slightly altered).

> So shone forth, in front of Troy, by the bed of the Xanthus,

or my

> Ah, unhappy pair, to Peleus why did we give you?

or my

> So he spake, and drove with a cry his steeds into battle,

the exact points which I wish him to avoid in Cowper's

> So numerous seemed those fires the banks between,

or in Pope's

> Unhappy coursers of immortal strain,

or in Mr Newman's

> He spake, and, yelling, held a-front his single-hoofed horses.

At the same time there may be innumerable points in mine which he ought to avoid also. Of the merit of his own compositions no composer can be admitted the judge.

But thus humbly useful to the future translator I still hope my hexameters may prove; and he it is, above all, whom one has to regard. The general public carries away little from discussions of this kind, except some vague notion that one advocates English hexameters, or that one has attacked Mr Newman. On the mind of an adversary one never makes the faintest impression. Mr Newman reads all one can say about diction, and his last word on the subject is, that he "regards it as a question about to open hereafter, whether a translator of Homer ought not to adopt the old dissyllabic *landis*, *houndis*, *hartis*" (for lands, hounds, harts), and also "the final *en* of the plural of verbs (we *dancen*, they *singen*, etc.), which still subsists in Lancashire." A certain critic reads all one can say about style, and at the end of it arrives at the inference that, "after all, there is some style grander than the grand style itself, since Shakspeare has not the grand manner, and yet has the supremacy over Milton;" another critic reads all one can say about rhythm, and the result is, that he thinks Scott's rhythm, in the description of the death of Marmion, all the better for being *saccadé*, because the dying ejaculations of Marmion were likely to be "jerky." How vain to rise up early, and to take rest late, from any zeal for proving to Mr Newman that he must not, in translating Homer, say *houndis* and *dancen;* or to the first of the two critics above quoted, that one poet may be a greater poetical force than another, and yet have a more unequal style; or to the second, that the best art, having to represent the death of a hero, does not set about imitating his dying noises! Such critics, however, provide for an opponent's vivacity the charming excuse offered by Rivarol for his, when he was reproached with giving offence by it: "Ah!" he exclaimed, "no one considers how much pain every man of taste has had to *suffer*, before he ever inflicts any."

It is for the future translator that one must work. The successful translator of Homer will have (or he cannot succeed) that true sense for his subject, and that disinterested love for it, which are, both of them, so rare in literature, and so precious; he will not be led off by any false scent; he will have an eye for the real matter, and where he thinks he may find any indication of this, no hint will be too slight for him, no shade will be too fine, no imperfections will turn him aside, he will go before his adviser's thought, and help it out with his own. This is the sort of student that a critic of Homer should always have in his thoughts; but students of this sort are indeed rare.

And how, then, can I help being reminded what a student of this sort we have just lost in Mr Clough, whose name I have already mentioned in these lectures? He, too, was busy with Homer; but it is not on that account that I now speak of him. Nor do I speak of him in order to call attention to his qualities and powers in general, admirable as these were. I mention him because, in so eminent a degree, he possessed these two invaluable literary qualities, a true sense for his object of study, and a single-hearted care for it. He had both; but he had the second even more eminently than the first. He greatly developed the first through means of the second. In the study of art, poetry, or philosophy, he had the most undivided and disinterested love for his object in itself, the greatest aversion to mixing up with it anything accidental or personal. His interest was in literature itself; and it was this which gave so rare a stamp to his character, which kept him so free from all taint of littleness. In the saturnalia of ignoble personal passions, of which the struggle for literary success, in old and crowded communities, offers so sad a spectacle, he never mingled. He had not yet traduced his friends, nor flattered his enemies, nor disparaged what he admired, nor praised what he despised. Those who knew him well had the conviction that, even with time, these literary arts would never be his. His poem, of which I before spoke, has some admirable Homeric qualities;—out-of-doors freshness, life, naturalness, buoyant rapidity. Some of the expressions in that poem, "*Dangerous Corrievreckan . . . Where roads are unknown to Loch Nevish*," come back now to my ear with the true Homeric ring. But that in him of which I think oftenest is the Homeric simplicity of his literary life.

THE END

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